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January



To Father —

Since you cannot listen  
to Dr. Farman directly,  
I want you to hear and  
enjoy him this way.

With Love

Feb. 12,

Marie



# Rough-Hewed and Other Sermons

By  
Raymond Lalor Forman



The Abingdon Press  
New York Cincinnati

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# Lincoln Christian College

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## ROUGH-HEWED

“AND Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.”—Genesis 50. 19–21.

THESE are among the noblest words in the Old Testament. It is not necessary for me to review the dramatic career of Joseph. It has earned its place in literature and music. Every child knows the story. I have chosen him as a triumphant example of a rough-hewed man.

No one was beaten and battered about more; no one the object of malice and undeserved punishment more than he. The very hardships he suffered and survived are those that men go down under every day. That bitter hatred brewed of envy was poured upon him. Cruel hands punished him. Alienated from friends and the favoring environment of his homeland, he was pushed as an exile in a land of strangers. There, on a flimsy piece of circumstantial evidence, he was charged with immorality and compelled to suffer the shame

and penalties of adultery. Clapped guiltless into jail, he was deceived and imposed on by those he favored. Every apparent opening proved to be a trap for him. Failure after failure; misfortune followed misfortune. He had reached manhood with a genius burning in his breast that was quenched at every flare, and, being bumped down to the place where most men would have exclaimed, "God and the fates are against me, so what is the use? Life is a grand deception and men are devils," he simply enlarged his capacity for punishment and waited. Never was there a time when he did not believe God was with him, and that the divine purpose crying but chained in him would some day be released. Though rough-hewed, God would finish him off.

So it was, when his spiteful brothers, who gave him the push that sent him tumbling through his misfortunes, being driven from their famine-swept land into the plentiful Egypt, and finding their brother in command of its wealth, bowed out their apologies, partly in respect for the wish of their now dead father and partly in fear of his revenge, Joseph said: "But as for you, ye meant evil against me but God meant it for good; . . . fear not."

God is our maker, not only as our Creator, but the molder of our careers and the divine



mender of our bad fortunes. The rough ax by and by gets into his hand as a graving tool. God does not create the afflictions and adversities that visit men. Ignorance, error, and sin are partly responsible. The flywheels of natural law, that produce our power, blessings, and our general good, are sure to do some damage. We cannot have that which makes the world as engaging and colorful as it is and a manhood of character and nobility, without moral freedom and adventure; and we can't have these without hazard, and some damage.

Remove the risk and life ceases to be interesting. The polar winds that give relief to tropical areas give to the north temperate zones an uncomfortable coldness. The same freezing cold that pinches the poor stays the contagion of deadly germinal diseases. Fire that warms us and keeps us snug is the same element that consumes our property and destroys life. A part of the credit item gets on the debit side of the ledger. Crucial tests and temptations that make some men, break others. Critical illnesses have proven the salvation of some people, being positively the first time they ever lifted their minds off material things. And not only those experiences that have a sinister aspect but those also that have a benignant countenance require a double entry.

Free, wide, and bountiful charity promptly relieves the distressed, but it also degrades the stamina of many others and makes them dependents. An heirloom of ease rots personal genius, and plenty's cornucopia has buried alive unreachd destinies; like men lost in a mine they have never been heard from since.

There are a thousand forces and factors that conspire to create circumstances; they gravitate into a deposit or residuum known as the law of things as they are. There is something of the moral law in it, something of the civil law, but largely the good and evil works of men; a mixture, set and hardened by custom and usage; fixed and unbudgeable, the delight of the Medes and Persians.

But the great matter for us is not that things are as they are, but, being as they are, what use shall we make of them? Now, the genius of a divine purpose has ever been one of invention; by which, so to speak, the tricks of fate can be turned against itself. To illustrate, a basket is not a transport for passengers, but Paul used it as an elevator "going down" from the Damascus wall and escaped with his life. A roof is a shelter, but the friends of the paralytic made a door of it, and through the opening the sick man was healed; the cross is an instrument of punishment and shame, but by

a divine usage it was turned into an emblem of everlasting glory and a key to the kingdom of God.

No, we cannot say that God brings disaster to his children, but he stands by and uses whatever comes for good, and more times than we know makes the wrath of men praise him. There is always a fine reaction when a man has stood in a crisis and fought a good fight; the exercise in the experience itself strengthens the fiber much as the pounding on the anvil develops the blacksmith's muscle, but there is more than that to it; the contest fashions out a capacity and proves the man worthy to receive that blessing that comes fresh, directly, and silently from God to the soul.

The ax that rough-hewed Joseph, bruised him, and bled him, was ever in the eye of the near-by God who had dreamed his dream in him; and when the malefactors cast it aside quite satisfied they had hacked the design to pieces, the Divine Sculptor took it in hand and fashioned him off a first-man.

Rough-hewed men are the only men that have anything to say to us. After living through twenty summers we are still of the opinion that our dreamed-out ideals should be fresh and active in the eye, and after living through the twenty winters, the inseparable



kindred of those twenty summers, we are of the opinion also that we must know how to stand against the sledge and ax. Men who have never been bumped are too soft for the intents and purposes of life in a world like this. Those who tell you they have never failed have altogether failed in that they have avoided the big battleground that stretches itself between where they are and their remoter fullest destiny. They have shied from the falls and have come far short. To be handed a clean bill by a moral life insurance agent is one thing, to be presented with a *croix de guerre* is another.

To play safe is to play a small game. If we ever get down to granaried Egypt, we shall be bumped part of the way. A humiliating failure in which a reputation for something is smashed into ugly and useless looking bits is but a sign to a wise man to begin to build anew at that point of reconstruction with better and sterner stuff. God alone knows what our calamities have saved us from!

“Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head,”<sup>1</sup>

Joseph was a signal example of the survival of the fittest. Fittest, not because he survived

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, “As You Like It.” Act ii, Scene 1.

the heats of anger and the hurts of murderous hands, pits and prison pens, indignities and false charges of scoundrelism and sin, but because he survived revenge. Revenge is one of those fibrous growths that if it have any rootage at all in a man's mind, spreads throughout the whole organism and promptly disqualifies him for his life's progress. One cannot push the campaign into new territory while he is in the business of settling up with someone or bringing up the arrears. People with chips on their shoulders never get the full, wholesome swing of life; if they did, the chips would fall off—which is precisely what they do not want.

There is a suggestion in this text which I want you to recall in those moments when you are about to rally your inner forces for retaliation. Let me begin this way. No man is ever better than the picture he has in his eye. Let me once know the object of his focus and I know the spirit and scope of his personal universe. Now, there are two visions, the primary and secondary, the direct path from the eye to the object, and also that dimmer region circumscribing it. No matter how charitable you may desire to be with your offender you cannot keep him in the direct vision and escape injury. You cannot expend heat and

hatred, a variety of imprecations and explosives, and while the fire burns muse on this wise: "There you are, you damnable scoundrel, you know you robbed me of my money, blotted my escutcheon, alienated my friends, and double-crossed me at every turn—but I seem to see in the dimmer zone the law of justice vaguely written and the cloudy image of the avenging angel."

The wrong vision. Shift! Have God and his on-stretching purpose of your life ever and always distinctly in your eye, and let the enemy stand in the mist. In the mist, I say. You can't altogether erase him and his offense, but you can keep the dimmer on him. You could not even succeed in this if you had to operate the dimmer; the secret of this success is that it works automatically when you turn your eye on God. Recall those remarkable words of Joseph, when his remorseful brothers expressed fear of his revenge. "Am I in the place of God?" He knew he had nothing to do with revenge. It wasn't his business. He couldn't forget their offenses: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good. . . . Now, therefore, fear ye not." The picture was there, but it was passive because his eye was on God, whose eye was on all. "Dearly beloved, avenge not your-



selves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." It must be that or this.

"Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself  
And so shall I starve with feeding."<sup>2</sup>

Let this be a fixed and firm conclusion in our minds — that revenge is none of our business. A philosophy easy to teach, you say, but hard to practice. Yes, and altogether impossible if one doesn't start right; start out with the eye on the enemy and all is lost. I repeat, to see him and say, "There you are, how I hate you — but I shouldn't feel this way about it; it unbecomes a Christian; I am to love you, erase the frown and show a smile—so here goes. There's a smile for you, enemy; a grimace I fear, a facial strain, but even so, it is done"—that, I say, can't be done.

"And her brow cleared, but not her troubled  
eye;  
The wind was down but still the sea ran  
high."<sup>3</sup>

We are too human to go straight with an enemy in the eye and heap coals of fire on his head. The coals would be heated with the

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<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, "Coriolanus."

<sup>3</sup> Byron, "Don Juan."

wrong fire and hurled before we got near enough to gently crown his pate with a head dress. One must go via God, and take the coals from his high altar. When the spirit journeys Godward the heart loses its angry heat, the eye sees its life steadily and whole, the full beautiful design as in a fabric unrolling in the future, and in that vaster view, the enemy is dim and small, and what he took from you appears as a burden pressing him into a pigmy. A kind of pity is stirred in the breast for him. He is the loser, not you. What he took from you, you can regain; what was taken from his personal worth when he took something away from you, he cannot have again unless you, whom he offended, restore him.

This, I think, throws some light on Paul's impossible sounding words: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink," and also Joseph's: "Now, therefore, fear ye not; I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." However much we resent the falls the enemy takes out of us and the humiliation it involves, we cannot bear seeing his character go to smash even upon us. Perhaps Markham's bit of spiritual geometry may be germane here:

“He drew a circle that shut me out—  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in.”<sup>4</sup>

It is commonly believed that the offender should make restitution. Often he is not in shape to do so. Restoration must first come out of a man's spirit. We forget that omnipresent Collector of Internal Revenue. All benefactions are exempted. Malefactions are forced to surrender more in personal worth than is gotten from another in goods and satisfactions. A man may smile as he brings home his loot; but while it is being placed in the storehouse the tax is being taken off from his fields, so to speak, or out of his own nature. While, on the other hand, a man who keeps his spirit right, above revenge and retaliation, every knock he gets, every forced retreat will bump him down to the fuller granaries of personal worth.

Simon, you recall, was exercised over his “give-and-take” bookkeeping. With an enemy in his eye he asked, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” The rabbinical rule was that after three offenses forgiveness might cease, but Simon, seasoning this justice with mercy,

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<sup>4</sup> Courtesy of Edwin Markham.

chose seven as a good round number, and had his scales so adjusted for the weighing of the flesh. But Jesus promptly told him he was yet in too small business, a mean little retailing trade, and that he must deal in larger figures. "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." In other words, the enemy suffers a famine, but your granaries are full. Be generous. Forgive always.

Of your virtues and the numerous items on the credit side, I am not unmindful, but you are not without faults, and some not without sins. It may be that while I have been speaking to you some secret misery has been stirring in your heart and creeping out from under cover. Some have "aught against their brothers," perhaps some trifling matter of long standing; some have scars in their memories and unhealed wounds in their hearts made by an enemy's fiery and poisonous arrows. Forgive to-day.

My experience has revealed this—that most of us go through life with grumbling annoyances and multiform miseries, silently spreading and souring the spirit. To change the figure, with a number of old open and unpaid moral accounts, that should have been canceled and closed out long ago, one cannot



always be collecting bad bills and go in for big, new business.

God grant that we may all go in for a richer, fuller life, a higher purpose, a nobler service, and, out of the abundance of this, wipe out the whole deficit now charged to others. ¶

Shift your vision to God and go on. And God and you can overcome all evil with good.

## IT HAPPENED ON STRAIGHT STREET

“ . . . Go into the street which is called Straight.”—*Acts 9. 11.*

STRAIGHT STREET, as it was in the first century, would be called a boulevard to-day. It was a mile long and a hundred feet wide, a straightaway from the eastern to the western gate of that famous old walled city of Damascus. It had three courses, a narrow one in the middle for pedestrians, and a wider course either side for chariots, one for eastward, the other for westward travel. Both sides of the pedestrian way were lined with Corinthian columns.

Straight Street was more than Main Street. The residences were palatial and the whole concourse breathed an air of luxury. I am told that scarcely anything remains of it to-day. One almost revolts from the vision of what it is now. Occidentalization and modernization have damaged it beyond recognition, and more than the hanging gardens are needed to sweeten its breath. Let us remember the other years.

Something happened on Straight Street. One day while the chariots were moving up

and down, and the natives in their gloriously colored gabardines were going to and fro, a small company came up the street leading a little man almost blind, a bent, blotched face man with a sparse beard, and not at all prepossessing in appearance. He had met with an accident just outside the city; he was struck down. With a Damascus sword? No, by the unseen Hand of the Lord, and in a most remarkable way. Whether this little band was led by the Spirit to conduct him to Judas' house we do not know. It was, however, a natural thing for them to do, for Judas was a Jewish Christian, an ardent and devout disciple of the Lord with an open mind, heart, and house. Then the voice of Christ came to Ananias saying that one Saul of Tarsus was in the house of Judas on Straight Street, behold, in a vision, a man named Ananias laying his hand on his head and restoring his sight, and that he should go now and fulfill it.

For those who may be chronologically confused, this was not the Ananias that married Sapphira; they never had any abiding in the street called Straight! This was an Ananias with a spiritual mind, that everybody knew and spoke of. God knows where to aim his voice and vision. He would be aiming more at us if our heads were not so hard. God has

not changed. There is a lot to be said on metal mind-ceilings, but we won't stop for that now.

What happened on Straight Street? A man went in from it blind and came out upon it, seeing; went in with a hatred for all mankind save those of his own sect, and came out with a love for those he hated; went in with a plan to destroy them, and came out with a passion to save them; went in a legalist, a ceremonialist, and came out a great lover. The squint had become a sunrise. Yesterday had someone shouted at him, "Saul, the Christians!" he would have gnashed his teeth and cried, "To Sheol with the whole set of them!" To-day the word brings tears to his eyes and quickens his step. A curse was turned to a prayer on Straight Street. Damascus was known for its swords, damaskeening made them the best in the world. Another industry it had, unknown to the famous city, where by a power mysterious the warring blade was forged into a lever that was to lift and turn the world upside down. The instrument of hatred and revenge turned into an instrument of love. A good one on Old Damascus!

I would give all I've got to have stood somewhere on Judas' porch when that apostle emerged into Straight Street again. Hear him shout, "Where did all the sky come from?"

It moved above and about him. It rang with immortality; it spoke as with voices and sang its everlasting theme of salvation into his soul. "My heart is full," he cries. "Let me get out on these roads and over these oceans with these glad tidings." "Wait, Saul," said the old, proud, smug spirit, making one final effort to hold him to his old office. "There is hunger on these roads, and stone-pelts in their shadows and shipwrecks on those seas, and in the deserts starvation." Then Paul opened his new heart and his new mouth and roared in his new high-toned laughter. "Ha! ha!" he shouted, "there is this and there is that, but there is *Christ!*" Whenever Paul shouted Christ it was with a peal of inner laughter like the chiming of a New Year's bell that rings out the old and rings in the new. How it echoed over the Gentile world!

In Paul's life, Paul's world, Paul's mind everything was Christ. In these days most everything is Christianity. Why do these conflicting orders of society continue to cast lots for the garment of Christ? Who can make a man out of Christianity? The traditional nine tailors can't do it. Who can make a Christian world with it? Christ makes. Christianity is but the record of it. To the source, my people, to the source!



But this concourse is but an antetype of that common Straight Street that runs from our eastern to our western gate. One solid mile of the visible and the concrete. Emerging from one mystery and sweeping westward to another. Out of the dim far-away, strange sweet music blows over the sunrise meadows. There are mothers' hope songs, their croonings and low lullabys, infant cries, mixed with countless tender whisperings. Then a little westward come the play grounds, buoyant laughter, jolly games. Now the street begins to show some buildings; the school-house appears, homes and shops, for living and trading, and they gradually disappear among the older residential section called West Straight Street. It is the quieter quarter; old houses, old folks, old parks, old groves of cypress trees, and then some little marble houses, and a trail over the hills and a hush. We meet all the world on Straight Street.

Within that mile of ups and downs and ins and outs, where energies are dreaming and constructing, buying and selling; in the active thinking and doing quarter we find our Saul. He needs to be converted. Converted? Was he a thief, a liar, an adulterer? Was his life dissipated, and oozing laxly away? No. He was enthralled. Wasn't he religious? Yes,

too much so. In it and by it he was bound, suffering from an acute contraction. Jesus used the hypodermic method, smote him with blindness as an anæsthetic and operated quickly, liberating his soul, releasing his capacity for love, reversing his power heavenward. He snatched him out of the law into life. A major operation, I should say.

My brethren, spurn not the miracle of sudden conversion, but watch for its appearing. God forbid that I should ever do so, for I have seen bad men suddenly made good, weak men suddenly made strong, cowardly men suddenly made courageous, hard-hearted men instantly made tender. I've heard profanity turn into praise in a moment; poor, miserable, wretched houses turned into homes of happiness. Is there nothing any more for our Magdalenes, Zacchæuses, and Sauls? No fountains in our day for sinners to plunge in and come out clean?

I knew once a Saul of Tarsus, with this difference, that my man was not a churchman. Not a bad man, but faithless and of the world, and formerly of considerable means. And even in those days I was proud to call him a kinsman. Just a few months ago we laid him away. When, at the close of the service, I went to the casket to lay the handkerchief over

his beautiful face, which I shall never again see in this world, the picture of that great day came back to me. His coming out of the world, converted, and gathering the household together to say: "Henceforth and forever I belong to Christ and Christ to me; the things I once loved now I hate, and those I hated now I love." From that day on he, like Paul, though a business man preached the gospel of redemption through the cross of Jesus Christ. He served country churches as a local preacher. Frequently after midnight he was found pouring his mind and soul in burning messages, and with his spiritual passion and dramatic force he brought many souls to the feet of his Redeemer. Spurn not that miracle. The power of Christ's shed blood is in it. I know whereof I speak.

There is something about this creed-prejudiced Saul and the name of the street he was led down that suggests a type that we are inclined to overlook. When we think of conversion we naturally turn to Slum Alley, or Robbers' Row, or Liars' Lane, but should we not give a thought to Straight Street and those law-conforming minds that have come straight from the feet of Gamaliel? I mean the able mind, the man of literature, science, and philosophy; the clean, straight man but

bound to his book shelf, his logic, and his embracement of changless premises and conclusions. All this too may be packed in a religious frame of mind. Oh for the great miracle to happen to such! Oh for these Sauls to meet the personal Jesus, the Soul's All and in All!

Some time ago I went to a distant city to speak at the church and stopped in a home of church folk. I had known one of the family elsewhere. They were pious and ran true to that unhappy, ungracious, heavy, drab form. They had a reputation in the town for honesty and scrupulosity in both religion and business. They all were straight as a die. But I wish to say that that was the silentest, solemnest party I was ever at. I was very uneasy, wondering whether I was the killjoy or whether it was a chronic family state. I racked my wits at the dinner table to keep things going, told all the funny stories I knew, but to no avail. I did not enjoy the meal. It was like a funeral supper. Really, had a scapegrace happened in to chime out something in these chills, about some bantering chat he had had with an old pal, or describe a soaring crow over a winter woods, or some tender human incident he had encountered, I would have fallen on his neck and cried, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

On the way to church I renewed my effort, and clapped on the back the lad I knew best, in the old familiar way, and exclaimed, "Wonderful night!"

"Yes," said he, gloomily.

"I've never seen the dipper as bright," I added.

"What dipper?" he asked.

I gave up in despair. After the meeting I pulled an acquaintance of the family one side and obsequiously asked if there had been a funeral in the household lately, and on learning there had not, it was on the tip of my tongue to remark that there were eight there now by actual count, but I didn't. It is not always wise to let go what is perched on the tip of your tongue!

Coming home in the sleeper, while lying in the berth with the shade up, with my eyes now on the heavens, now on the mellow starlit fields sweeping by, I thought it all over. What a strange, stupid, joyless affair religion can turn out to be! The vision of the Evangel restoring those who are dead in their trespasses and sins on our Bowerys, with his might and power and beauty, came to me only to be followed by another vision of those dead in an imprisoning code or a cathedral, of those dead-alive people, who have given up



the ghost. Surely, there is a call out of these tombs for the Evangel.

What is the matter with them, what the lack? Maybe I read the secret of it in the stars. I do not know, but the word "wonder" came to my mind and would not be dismissed. Wonder disenthalls men. Let them be astounded or amazed and their binding systems drop off. Like the Samaritan woman at the well, who went off full of wonder and forgot the pitcher she had brought to carry the water in. Wonder is in the soul of regeneration, rejuvenation, and rejoicing—the three great R's of the kingdom of God. When there is no more wonder there is no life. "Thou shalt call his name Wonderful!" Truly, thou art wonderful, O Christ. Thou bringest a pageant out of the world and glory out of all things. Thou movest through them, and the mountains and the hills break forth before thee in singing and the trees of the fields clap their hands. Thou drawest near these bodies, spiritless, lifeless and cold, and thou touchest them and sayest, "Awake, my child," and new eyes open upon a wonder-world.

Are you alive? Are you awake? Tell me not what you know, or what you have done! Do you live? Arise, thy light is come! See by it all the glory of your Lord, and the won-

ders of his kingdom. I call you Ananias, Spirit-filled Ananias. I command you to go and seek out the bound and blind Sauls on Straight Street and say, "The Lord, even Jesus, . . . hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight."

## GIVE US MORE HEAT

“Fervent in spirit.”—*Romans 12. 11.*

### (A COMPLAINT AND PLEA)

LIGHT up the fires! There is nothing as cheerful as a blazing hearth, and nothing as chilly as a cold one with the residue of grey-white ashes and charred faggots heaped up about the cold bricks and iron. The jamb and mantel frame a picture of despair. Light up the fires! A world of clay and flesh and things is a cold world, a dead world waiting to be born; and death is cold, graves are cold, tombstones are cold, but life is warm, its spirit is a flame and its presence is a glow.

Our central fires are low, stamped almost out, and the flying sparks have sprayed the margin and set it on fire. “An enemy hath done this.” Where shall we find men singing an ode to Life? Everywhere we find them singing odes to a living; odes to beeves and banks and cups of pleasure. Life’s clothing is warm; its heart is cold. The fire on the altar of the inner sanctuary is smoldering; the border of commerce, trade, and pleasure is well lit and throbs with warm activity. Zeal? You’ll find it in all pursuits that fill purses

and build larger barns. Not that some of it should not be there, but not all. And you must go to the stadia and the big amphitheater of amusement to see the public's fervent spirit.

A few months ago our ears were opened to the paganish chant of hero-worship, when it happened that a motion-picture sheik and a great educator, above whose mind there ever sat a flame that pointed toward heaven and gave true light to the thinking world for two generations, died at the same time. The streets were full of ardent mourners, thousands of them, actually fighting for an opportunity to see the sheik's face, and in the newspapers column after column featured his life, while the great educator passed with a comparative scant notice.

The last good zealot of the highlands is dead, and his chilly contemporaries have carved this epitaph in the cold marble on his grave:

“Here lies a zealot; let him go;  
A final flame in a world of snow.  
Lived and labored out of joint;  
A tongue of fire without a point.”

But before he gave up his ghost he whispered to all that could hear: “I am not dying a nat-

ural death as men suppose, I have been stoned to death with cold heads and cold hearts. I came singing a song of God's great summer in a land of Eskimos. My fever could not withstand their cold. My poor, flickering torch lit from the burning spirit of Life is quenched. I'll be buried in Iceland, but I'll arise in the Land of the Sun."

How easy it must be to discover the North Pole in this generation! It is nearer to us than it ever was before. And in the mental and moral worlds more have discovered it than you think. These mental tourists have taken a whack at it, as they do at everything, and have brought their chunk home and put it over the fireplace and it dripped down and put the fire out, and served as a *Frigidaire* for the whole being. It has chilled the thought by chilling the food for thought, which is mostly cold cuts. Mental treats are ice-box puddings. I search almost in vain for something nobly warm in modern literature. It is either cold and heady or vicious—refrigeration or refuse. Let no one think that this present world will be destroyed by fire; it will be smashed on its own iceberg.

Alas! Life's fervency and zeal and heat power have slipped to the lower levels to turn the wheels of the manufactory and work up a



big business perspiration, while the flame above the head has vanished, leaving cold, hard, and silent minds.

There is too much cold in the kingdom of God. Here too we seem to hate heat, and, figuratively speaking, we have scrapped all of the known heating systems. The open glowing hearth with visible upward shooting flames is out of date. Let some successor of John the Baptist appear with a burning enthusiasm for Christ and he would be coldly received, judged to be a back number, in his cups, or a dish fit to be served up to some silly psychoanalyst. Spiritual steam has gone not because we deny its power, but despise its heat. What our age really wants is "cold steam" to produce moral ergs. The scientific brand of religionists are experimenting with this, but up to date have made no favorable report.

It is our custom to call everything that does not hit us like a brick "hot air," which has become a byword for the vapid, volatile, and the visionary. I am not sure we are in a way to distinguish between futility and inspiratory power. For my part I welcome that spirit that can light up and warm what a man already has in his mind rather than the producer that lays one more cold meat loaf on the thought-shelf. There is no odor to anything

that is frozen. Both filth and fragrance are apparently peculiar to the warm countries, which does not mean that the Icelanders are as clean and the rationalists as purely true in their thought as they seem to be.

Believe me, while there is a spark among the embers there is a use for even the bellows and the blow torch, but what, in Heaven's name, is the use of lugging home more cold logs if there is no possibility of a flame or a fire? We do get a few sparks from steel and flint. Heat by friction. Let us get up a good rubbing or drubbing and we begin to show a little warmth, and pull off our coats to further the fight. A theological dispute makes warm disputants. Christian brothers have quarreled and consigned each other to hell-flames (not the best kind of heat) over their disagreement on a dogma that hangs from the love of God or the status of the Holy Ghost. We, like the management of the Sesquicentennial, celebrate our wide liberty by staging a prize fight in the middle of it "to draw" and arouse interest. But it is an unsatisfactory "draw"; the attendance is cheap and does not pay expenses, and the fight is a most disappointing "draw." A lot of knocking, but no "knock-out." It is turned over to the scholastic referees for decision, and they debate it

through nine hundred and sixty-nine thousand seven hundred and forty-two pages of cold print and it is still a draw, and a drawback. Never has one of these friction-fires burst out into a flame that it did not consume away a little more of the altar.

Churches and pulpits are too cold. We have, in many parts, a freezing church architecture—stone, terra cotta, and marble without and within. Cavelike places, with stalactite-stalagmite pillars, where the foot-falls in the aisles resound mournfully as they do in cemetery receiving vaults; where the prayer-breath freezes on the lips of the heart. The vogue is to have standing in the pulpit a cleanly carved ecclesiast, with a nice and formal mind to deliver some frozen cubes of ashes swept up from some old grates, or congealed sawdust stolen from prominent editorial cold-storage plants.

Churches do not want prophets of fire any more; the glow hurts their eyes, and enthusiasm makes them nervous. I venture to say if the apostle Paul were alive, church committees would reject him, running from the hot outpourings of his soul, crying, "Give us Apollos!" By the way, this church is named for the great apostle. Let me look you over. I can't see all of you—what may be in your

mind and heart; but if there be those here this morning who love not what he loved, who have no desire for his holy passion, who feel none of the warmth from his heart burning for Christ, begone! This is no place for you. If you are a sinner, this is the place for you; if your heart is broken and heavy, this is the place for you; if you long to be like Jesus, this is the place for you; if you seek the fellowship of his sufferings and the power of his resurrection, this is the place for you; but if you have come here with a cold heart to pay your respects to the moral law of a dead Christ in an ecclesiastical sepulcher, begone! There is no funeral here, but a perpetual summer festival.

We do not seek warm prophets any more. A man on fire for God is not the kind of a fire people run to. And there are few alarms. We have among the teachers of the prophets an indefatigable vigilance committee, who make it their business to put on their scholastic spectacles and spy out the sparks with a view of quenching them before they make "headway," thus assuring the churchmen that no fire will break out in their pulpits, or burn like beacons on the hilltops, or creep over the low levels of humanity for a cleansing. We have an excellent fire-extinguishing department. They cure

the fever by administering the chills. And no passion can move through frozen blood.

If anyone should ask me what the greatest need of the church is, I should promptly say, "Heat." It began with it, and without a pentecost it perishes. When the old wildernesses no longer light up with the flame or echo with the voice of our John the Baptists; when no longer hearts are strangely warmed in our Aldersgate Streets, winter has come. There is a howling of the blowing cold through the heart and the wolf is at our door.

Summer is the season for song, for ripening and reaping, for crops, both in souls and gifts. Notwithstanding this we are trying to do with a cold process that which requires heat. In the matter of gifts we drive, wrest, pull, push, yank, by force and pressure to gather our funds, which should and would come easily, with more heat, as a natural flow from a great melt in the mind and heart. Hammering cold steel is not a successful means of expanding it. Neither is the effort to expand minds and hearts by the same method.

The expansive and extensive mind which we call "international," of the social and political type, is a masterpiece of quality. The property of it is radiation. He who does not love his own country with an ardent passion is not



likely to see other peoples as a kindred. Nor need we expect a man to be even mildly warm toward Africa or India or China or less distant folk unless he is hot for his part of the kingdom, enthusiastic and industrious in his own vineyard. It takes the light of a good big fire to see the whole world as a parish, and it must be warm light; polar light puts a pallor on every project. Nothing worth while has ever been done for men save by the compulsion of a burning and glowing love.

Look over the men whom Jesus chose to frame the preamble of our whole constitution. John the Baptist was a flamboyant spirit, a torch-bearer, even the torch, burning to wane and vanish in the rising sun in the soul of Christ. Lovable John and judicious James were early called "Boanerges"—the sons of thunder; both were men of powerful impulses and passions. Simon Peter was a spasmodic flame, the forerunner of the steady glow. Andrew also was a quick and impulsive man. Simon the Zealot's title gives us a clue to his character. Judas Iscariot was a man of enthusiasm, which was not his weak point. Barnabas was a hospitable fireplace; Paul, a beacon burning on a hill. Jesus himself was an enthusiast, called a fanatic by the stand-patters of his day.

My judgment is that you can't make anything succeed with cold-blooded men. Give me a fanatic rather than a fish. For any sort of reformation or revival I choose Luther, not Erasmus. This is not a snap judgment either. Sacred and profane history bear me out. If you can name one man of the cold, calculating and cautious type that has ventured beyond the precincts of an established settlement and brought some fresh boon or blessing to the people, I'll retract or at least recall my statement for reconsideration. To achieve requires an intense love of something, faith in something. Have you ever seen cold love or cold faith? They are the light and power of an inner fire.

A cold Christian is a sinner. I can imagine men who profess less, who have certain sins to their discredit, but they still love God enough to inwardly weep over them. They have something of a spiritual passion; but to make a high profession and have a cold heart is to make the whole life a sin. And the pity of it is that too many of our churches are governed by this frozen fraternity. Let some love-impulse stir and start into being and they come down on it like sleet. In ten minutes it is snow-bound. An icy hand goes up and stops all traffic. Give us more heat, more heat! My

heart's desire and prayer for Zion is for a rise in temperature.

Am I wrong in believing that when Jesus came he turned the whole wide world into summer? I know I am not, then:

“Tell all the world that summer's here again:

Folk go about so solemnly and slow,

Walking each one his grooved and ordered  
way

I fear that, otherwise, they will not know!”<sup>1</sup>

Wherever I see Christ I see summer—warm, glowing, songful summer. However dark my skies may be, they are but a passing cloud. The skies of his Galilee are blue and they are mine too. There is plenty of good weather in these parts if only we know where to find it. Even those melancholy seasons of sorrow, like long, blue shadows cast upon the snow by a setting winter sun, can be transformed into summer, sunshine, and song. Will you pardon me if I use here a bit of my own experience? My mother was dying. She had only a few moments to live, we were told. I asked my poor, trembling father and the family to bow on their knees with me. I started to pray as one in a winter mood, but suddenly a vision of a summer calm, with its light and

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Kemp, *Chanteys and Ballads*. Reprinted by permission of Brentanos, publishers.

fragrance, fell upon the dark event in my heart which I could only describe in those lovely lines of Whittier:

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
The silence of eternity,  
Interpreted by love!

Winter was gone. All was warm. We knew that she and we were together living beyond that great spring festival called Easter. We were knee deep in God's June.

Such a light!—that light which shone out of the open tomb and brought immortality to light, and gave the world we live in an everlasting southern exposure. "Come," said the voice, "come, ye hibernated hearts, sitting in darkness, cold with fear and doubt, the sun is up and shining, and see, see beyond the calm, blue hills the gables of the Father's house."

Everything about Jesus warms the heart. His own heart, burning with love for you, is the hearth of your souls; and his outstretched arms, the boundaries of the home of your spirits. All he said and did might be gathered up in his "Come unto me." His arms were nailed, outstretched upon the cross, as a perpetual reminder of his mercy and his love.

O living, warm, and tender arms of Christ! How often have they supported and enfolded us! In our weariness we have leaned on them. In our bad spells of world-weather they have shielded us; and some time, not far hence, in an hour of a night, we will fall asleep in them, to the sweet lullaby: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And he will cover us from the cold with his warm comforts. And we shall awake with his face bending over us, and his voice saying, "The morning cometh!" and we shall smile and say, "And it's summer."

Let us sing a pæan of joy to Christ! Let us lift our voice and proclaim this Saviour to men. Let us be fervent in spirit serving him. Hear us, O Christ, hear the cry rising out of these restirred and burning hearts. "I love thee more than all others and all else. I love thee, Christ, who so loves me. I'll die—wait a moment—yes—the vision of the cross comes again—I'll die for thee who died for me!"



## AMBASSADOR TO ALL OUTDOORS

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”—*Mark 16. 15.*

AN interesting little book might be written on how speakers get their topics. Fashioning topics is an art in itself. A topic is just what the word implies, top-ic, or head piece; in other words, the hat of the theme. It sometimes requires a tiresome round of shopping before one can find a hat that fits and has style and color withal. I am about to tell you how I came upon this one. It was handed to me.

Bishop Wilson, who, besides his gift of administrative ability and sound utterance, possesses a fine sense of humor, had occasion to call me on the telephone to get a piece of information about Saint Paul's Church, and set out by having a little fun with me. “This is L. B. Wilson,” he said. “Will you favor me by writing a letter of commendation to aid me in securing a commission at Washington?” Having several Wilsons in my acquaintance, and not being accustomed to hearing the Bishop called “L. B.,” I wondered which of the Wilsons it was, and what that particular

Wilson wanted. I stammered a bit and said, "I don't quite understand," but as he began again I recognized his voice and laughed. When I called back to supply him with the facts, I began by saying, "Did you get your commission?" The quick rejoinder came, "Oh, yes, I have been appointed as the Ambassador to all Outdoors." The more I thought about it the more beautiful it seemed. An ambassador to all outdoors! And while there is more in it than I could disclose, I dared to adopt it as a topic.

Immediately the blue hills rose up as a background, with their dim, mystical outlines, communing with a vast and wondrous sky. Fields of flowers ran off to meet them. Cattle grazed on the nearer hills. Seas reached out in a shoreless expanse, over which God's winged creatures were soaring, and on which ships were sailing. Cedars rose before the sundown like dark and dauntless sentinels of the night against the crimson streaks and low-lying purple, spindled clouds. Ways well-worn crossed and recrossed, whereon men were seeking their toil and returning rejoicing to see the far-off lights of home. There were sowers and reapers on the slopes, fishers by the seaside, and through the vast area of nature and of men moved a God-filled Man with a radiant

soul, with strong heart, and willing hand—an ambassador to all outdoors.

What is an ambassador? Directly, one who represents his sovereign and his country abroad. He is the promoter and conservator of mutual relations. He is not the agent of his country's commerce and trade as much as of the personal resources. He is not so much a student of industrial and political geography as of social and human geography. And, indirectly, his return trips are as valuable as his passages over. He represents us abroad, and he represents those abroad to us. He sets off with a baggage of American ideas and spirit and customs and all of our inalienable properties, and returns with trunklike capacities filled with the tempers, traditions, thoughts, and feelings gathered over there. He is both exporter and importer. It is largely what he brings back, which, when woven into common stock, tends to fashion out that harmonious international design.

Personally speaking, we all have our human nativity, where the nature of each man is a law unto itself. But this individuality centers a vast kingdom which has commerce through unseen agents and seems to have no horizon limit. The mysterious goings and comings never cease. A severing of a man's

spirit from the universe, or his soul from the sky and the sea, has not yet been discovered. Why is a tree so beautiful, a heath so lovely, and the flowers so engaging, and all God's country so inviting? They are embassies for the higher senses to visit and reside, and we are not quite sure that they exist apart from these arrivals. They are of another kingdom waiting for us to come. And a man is a poor provincial until his soul goes abroad and gleans the fields, seas, and skies of their essences.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!

He, too, is no mean preacher.

Come forth into the light of things,

Let nature be your teacher.<sup>1</sup>

He that loves not songs and seas and shore lines, he that feels no thrill at seeing a distant church spire on a hazy sky line, or a windmill churning the blue, or the sun-smitten side of an old country barn in spring; he whose heart does not leap up at the sight of children's faces, and dance to the music of their laughter; he who is not deeply moved at the show of some act of effacement, of courageous sacrifice, or some noble heroic of the meanest of God's mortals, though he says his prayers, knows all the creeds and keeps the Decalogue, is already damned. The righteousness which is of the

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<sup>1</sup>William Wordsworth, "The Tables Turned."

law, the indoor digest of religious dicta, is dead. There is a statelier sanctuary for the soul, a sky-vaulted one, wherein the lowering fire on the Western altar leaps to a flame in the East with the new-blown breath of every dawn.

The mind could scarcely see to move about in the Gospels were it not for the out-of-doors that fills them. Think of the lovely night and the star-guided Magi, the shepherds and sheep pastures, the hilltops consecrated by prayer; sowers and reapers; Easter dawn and eternal spring. Out of narrow and confining temples the Ambassador of God went abroad to glean in two worlds. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Paul constructed a great cathedral school and furnished it with wisdom. No one has yet completely mastered his textbook. There you have the groundwork of your doctrines. But were it not for the windows and the doors opening up on Galilee and Judæa the eye would blind for want of light and the soul smother for want of air. Paul's courses in themselves lacked out-of-doors. He trusted to the gospel windows.

Our churches are home offices where ambassadors are to be charged and from which they

are to be dispatched, and to which they are to return to give report of all the soul has seen and felt, and to tell of the goodnesses and mercies found in God and men, to sing the saga of the early simples. All real churches are open for vision and ventilation. And all good Christians must be good seers and good breathers. Our real business is spiritual intake and output—inhalation and exhalation. We are transformers of the currents of life and love, God's free gifts, exhaling them in personal blessing. A good breathing system is a sign of a vital spiritual life. How better can we illustrate this than the effect of poor physical ventilation upon worship? The most devoted cannot watch one hour in a volume of carbon dioxide. Even saints will sleep when gassed. And more services have been funkcd by bad air than bad sermons or singing. Our sextons are trained in the correlatives of "warm" and "cold," but few in "fresh" and "stale." A prelude or an interlude on the ventilator is at times even more acceptable than one on the organ.

The picture of a disappointed God often appears in my mind. Having finished the background, composed of nature and the world in which are hidden the resources of joy for the heart and food for the soul, that they may



grow thereby, he turns to man to endow him with a mind to think and a soul to take in all life in two worlds; then, with his eyes leveled to the high mind and full soul, he waits for man to meet him, but, alas! there comes creeping up a pigmy with no more than the withered tissues of the God-given capacity. God looks down and speaks: "Haven't you found my life?"

"Life," the creature answers. "Where was it?"

"Everywhere," says God. "Abroad! Abroad!"

"But I never went abroad, I've lived within myself."

What a pity to live such an indoor life! Are you self-worn, shop-worn, suffocated, cramped with conventions? Find the door; if that be rusted, try the window; if that be sealed, break open the side of the house and go!

"There is a crying in my heart,  
That never will be still,  
Like the voice of a lonely bird  
Behind the starry hill;

"There is a crying in my heart  
For what I may not know—  
An infinite crying of desire  
Because my feet are slow.

. . . . .

“My feet are slow, my eyes are blind,  
 My hands are weak to hold;  
 It is the universe I seek,  
 All life I would enfold!”<sup>2</sup>

In a mental way we are called to ambassadorial labors. Too often thoughts are as small-town transgressors. They lack that atmosphere that gives them life, and space that gives them meaning, proportion, and perspective. Untraveled minds are narrowly inductive. Consider the real facts of life that are entertained in the common mind; are they ever seen as they ought to be until the mind moves with them through the infinite? They have a homing in the abstract and the mind finds rest with them only there. Little do we know what domestic discontents and annoyances are bred from a mental staleness.

Not long ago I found myself in a home where, figuratively speaking, the quarters were small and unventilated. It was a picture of devitalization. I had to put my near-sighted glasses on to see what the trouble was. It was a bad case of that disease so common to mortals called smallness or “localitis.” The talk was small, the spirit smaller. There was an airing of picayune fusses, crumby gossip,

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<sup>2</sup> Harry Kemp, *Chanteys and Ballads*. Reprinted by permission of Brentanos, publishers.

back-biting. Finally I girded up my courage to say, not "Shall we pray about this?" but, "Have you ever been away much?"

When the response came to the effect that they had rarely ever left the place, I ventured further, "Have you got some money in the bank?"

Strange to say, they did not remind me that it was none of my business, but meekly said, "Yes."

"Spend it," I said. "Go on a journey."

"But the child is in school."

"Take him out."

"But the business?"

"That can wait; go, and don't bundle up too much. Let the winds blow on you; you don't breathe right. Keep your eyes and ears open; you don't see and hear right. See all you can, hear all you can; you are out of touch with the larger life. You need to be refreshed."

They took my prescription—and with profit. Life is too full and rich to be tuning the ear to flea hums when just abroad the lark is singing a full-throated lofty song.

Some months ago when I was in Boston a friend told me that some citizens of a village near that city, never having seen the Northern Lights before and mistaking them for a fire on

the outskirts, called out the village fire department to put out the aurora borealis! Of course they didn't do it. But who can question the spirit and vigilance of these villagers? Now, I have more respect for men who dare address their limited mental machines to the abstract, although they can't do much with it, than to use their noblest and highest capacities in woefully small business; and the worst of all is to turn the industries of the soul to the making of smudge for the blotting of someone's escutcheon.

It is a great thing to have an exposed life, an open mind, for God's fresh spirit of life and truth to fall upon the thoughts as the morning dew clings to the grass; a quiet, open, reflective soul, to image the heavenlies as the sky is mirrored in the calm sheen of the still waters.

Christian ministers are ambassadors of Christ not by virtue of ordination or office or language, but by the call that preceded all. A call to represent God, truth, love, and power invisible to a world of mortals, and a call to represent the kingdom of the human heart to God. Importunate need knocks on the higher door and it opens. God has the answer, but we, ambassadors, know not which word to speak until we know the hearts of the people. Scarcely can a vital message issue from a

cloistered mind; always through the ambassador from the people's hearts.

More than once the message of this messenger has languished and died in mere words as tombs, and he has closed the book, found his way late on Saturday to some sorrowful room where a pool of tears had a star shining in it, or where some "head was bloody but not bowed," and, returning, climbed upon a mound of books and desks and pens and words, and like a watchman in the night, cried out and waited to see and hear what God would say to such. And the image of the Great Sovereign appeared on the throne of his cross, and his voice came down to me, "Ambassador, go, carry the good tidings of eternal life and the Father's love to all the world, and comfort thou my people." To catch the rhythm of that message, to feel the power of it, to know the surety of it, is to have something to say.

All we are ambassadors. Our very souls declare our kinship with the eternities and their abidings in the hearts of all men. We are citizens of a country extended beyond our little mortal limits. To be at home wherever God has stretched forth his hand, that is the thing. "And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And

he answered them, saying, Who is my mother or my brethren? And he looked round about on them that sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

To find a home where the skies and hills are, and seas and fields; to find one's kin where human hearts are—this is to be an ambassador. To enter life, even contented life, with something more abundant; to bring God's terms of peace to rebellious minds; to move into sorrow's hearts with a mandate from the Sovereign; to annex heaven, whither their beloveds have gone, to their little terrestrial province—that is to be an ambassador.

Discharge your commission well, in this world among men, with all its mysteries, where love is sealike in its depth and breadth, and hope a sky of star-signs, where soul service rises in its noble altitude like hills to beautify it all. When that day shall come when weariness overtakes you, and Nature's final slumber robe is about to be thrown around you, we shall have an ear for what you whisper:

Under the wide and starry sky  
Dig the grave and let me lie.  
Glad did I live and gladly die.  
And I laid me down with a will.



This be the verse you grave for me:  
"Here he lies where he longed to be;  
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill."<sup>3</sup>

Thy Sovereign Ambassador,

"He, whom the boundless heaven adores,  
Whom angels long to see,  
Quitted with joy those blissful shores,  
Ambassador to me!"

is calling thee back to thy Homeland and waiting to crown thee with the Everlasting, now, no more a hope.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, "Requiem." Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

## PICTURE AHEAD!

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”—*Proverbs 29. 18.*

THE average man is less than six feet tall. His focus is actually lifted out of its horizontalism to gaze on our skyscrapers, the work of his own mind and hands. From every appearance he is geared to the ground, with interests that are short in stature; his desire to eat, drink, and be merry and to have the wherewithal to consume and count. These would seem to be paramount. But the more we learn of him the more we are convinced that it is not so; that he is more attracted by things unseen than seen. It is not what is in hand, but what is ahead. He is not as eager to be rich as to succeed in what he is doing. He derives his completest satisfaction from making images. The everlasting lure is in the picture ahead. He is prouder of his productive ideas than his pile of wealth, and what are ideas but the useful copies of his prospective pictures?

It can be safely said, I think, that nothing worth while has ever come into the world, either visible or invisible, until it has already been announced: “Behold, the dreamer com-

eth!" Much as the concrete world took shape and became substance, out of nebula, according to Kant, Herschel, and Laplace, so the world's utilities, compositions, and solid stuffs have crystallized and cooled out of men's visions, as deposits from the unseen. One can scarcely think of a word more closely allied to our bodily being than "provision." Does it not suggest beeves, bread, banks, goods, and bulk of all kinds? Hyphenate the word and mark it well: *pro*, "before"; *vision*, "see"—to see before. There is the *modus operandi* of all of man's progress in that word. What man can visualize as good and productive, that is bound to come into being.

The Creator has accommodated time, space, and things to man's vision. That ever-renewed picture, its delightful gamut of color tones, its infinite variety of form, its endless interpretations, keep man hoping, moving, acting, and also happy.

Like the roundness of the earth, man's life is an orb. We speak of the round of life, the cycle of years and days. His life-line is curvilinear. To-morrow is always around the bend. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." It is well it is so, else we should be constantly living in the gloomful shadows of

events that the lowering western sun would cast upon us. There is a divine purpose in our human geometry. Just as the horizon line limits our physical vision, so there is a horizon line in a man's mind that limits the knowing and understanding. And where man cannot see with his eye or his mind, there he dreams, wonders, meditates, and fashions his images. There is always a picture ahead that he is making.

Man is a master painter. To be sure, he dips into the pigments of the known, the big pot of experience, but not satisfied with this he stirs in some sky tones, to give his product that ethereal glow that every masterpiece must have. God has seen to it that sufficient material is provided; which itself is in the form of a vast masterpiece, perfect yet unfinished, waiting for the appropriating and completing genius in man's mind and soul. It feeds hope and quickens the purpose.

We are very apt to think of time as it moves on in its steady way as a mere grinding out of nature's law, or at best, a cold and heartless spirit, to whom we call, but says no word; whom we implore to abide with us, and hear our laughing or our weeping, but neither waits, laughs, nor weeps—just plods on with his head ducked in his winter great-coat under our gray

sky. Or again, as figures on the calendar to be tolled off, or as beads to be counted, tearfully coming to the end where hangs the cross of death? Believe me, time is rather a gallery of masterpieces of exquisite color tone, harmony, and form. Every day is a picture in a frame. Take your eye from the page of the actuary and let it fall on the page of the poet.

“Night’s candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tip-toe on the misty mountaintops,”<sup>1</sup>

Again

“But, look, the morn in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o’er the dew of yon high eastward  
hill.”<sup>2</sup>

Considering how the day wakes up in a bird-song and a vast flood of heavenly light and circumscribes men with its harmony, and illumined presence, then dozes in the stars and sleeps again in a dark and silent sky—well, it is not the least of our many joys of living to feast the eyes on these pictures just ahead.

No awakened soul can be bored with this world; he is too busy taking it into his mind and soul. Who has not a sense of beauty is

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, “Romeo and Juliet,” Act iii, Scene 5.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, “Hamlet,” Act i, Scene 1.

but half alive. When we are bored, we are bored with ourselves.

Some time ago I was startled into recognizing the supreme power that pictures ahead have over men's callings. I was visiting an art gallery and by and by came upon a painting that astonished me. My first judgment was that it had no business there fraternizing with reproductions of ideals forefigured in angels and nymphs, human characterization, landscapes and in *chiaroscuro* like Correggio's, pellucid demi-tints and warm reflections; in meditative tones, like Millet's; and I wondered how it managed to creep in over the sill of that sanctum. It was backgrounded with night. In the foreground stood a great industrial plant, with innumerable conical kiln-chimneys, and cylindrical smokestacks, in series, rising into the sky and belching forth fire and smoke, that diffused vermillion through it all. It shone on the breasts of the open-shirted men moving about the steaming cauldrons, sent lines of crimson up the masts of the ships, and flooded the floors of the barges waiting at bay for the products. It was a study in red and black and smoky gray. It throbbed in its own pigments, with a virile power. I was about to resent it and pass on, when the genius of it re-engaged me. It



seemed to speak to me and say, "I am the picture of the dreams of ten thousand young men." True indeed. Who would say that our Carnegies and Schwabs were burning in their desire for wealth? They were rather "called" by such a picture ahead.

Successful men have never yet been able to tell us in the articles they write for magazines what the secret of their success is. They are sure of some of the factors, such as industry, obedience, application, promptness, but the master-factor seems to have modestly retired from their minds. It is vision. No man can be a success without it. If these magnates were to tell you the whole truth, they would start by saying: "In the beginning I was a romancer. It was the picture just ahead that I would reach and realize."

Most of us are in the studios early. Children are adepts at the imitative art and copy making. Watch the antics of a little boy in his father's clothes and you have a glimpse of a picture just ahead. Trail them to their play rooms and note the trend of their devices, and you have a rough sketch of some future master-pieces.

A man's soul is a microcosm of many worlds and a gallery of many pictures. Our individualities are but various art schools. Some

seem to have majored in the Florentine, with an appreciation for grandeur, dignity, and force; others in the Flemish and Dutch, with an eye for the glory in ordinary objects and moods, in commonplaces and the lowest order of subjects. And to see pictures there, to penetrate the shabby and see the soul of something is an incomparable virtue.

“Outside my window I can see  
The sweet blue lake of Galilee,  
And Carmel’s purple-regioned height,  
And Sinai clothed with stars and night.  
But this is told in confidence,  
So not a word when you go hence,  
For if my landlord once but knew  
My attic fetched so large a view,  
The churl would never rest content  
Till he had raised the monthly rent.”<sup>3</sup>

Even Grub Street makes a fine picture. They do not wear silk stockings there; there is no snobbishness there. There live the people who do the hard work of the world. Now and again we find those whom nature has endowed or fortune favored with education, finer sensibilities, and perhaps a large purse, wondering whether anything ideally good can come out of Grub Street; whether there can be

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<sup>3</sup> Harry Kemp, *Chanteys and Ballads*. Reprinted by permission of Brentanos, publishers.

anything beautiful about those who wear cheap clothing that smells of fried food, and are the end products of three or four generations of double negatives, whom we hear say to one another: "Now, listen, Mamie, I sez to him, I sez, 'I ain't goin' nowhere with you to-night, see?' And he sez, 'What did you say?' he sez, and I tole him again, see?" That is their mere talk. That which is unexpressed in them is best. Let us make no mistake about this. The truth is that there is not only something beautiful about these people but there is something beautiful in them. There is a tender stream of compassion, and a natural sympathy that runs through their hearts, that joins them into a strong brotherhood. I've seen them carrying bread to each other's doors, and in their bungling but sincere way sharing each other's sorrows.

The angel of God has not passed by Grub Street. Moreover, they have seen something in the sky at the end of their street. They have pictures ahead. They do have ideals. When the crises come do they not rise to them? Some of these indefatigable artists have actually dropped at their easels while laying on the thick shadows of Calvary. When the bugles blow at the end of the street, calling for defenders of the country, do not the young

men pour out of these doors? Did they not tramp between life and death and write home to their mothers prayers and visions celestial that make one weep to read them? Oh, yes, they too have noble pictures ahead. And there is nothing much more glorious in the way of a picture than a sunset on the flats.

Yes, there is one more glorious, and ever more so, and without it these poor mortals would fall away, even plunge, into a hopeless and chilling dark, as would the planets were the sun withdrawn. I mean the living image of the Eternal Christ. "Behold the Christ stand!" He is the Sun of our souls, drawing us to himself. Because he lives we live also; he speaks, and warm truth steals into our hearts; he looks, and light benignant falls on our spirits; he touches, and we are healed; he holds, and we are secure. All that there is in the kingdom of heaven consists in him—our All and in All.

"Where there is no vision the people perish," or, as the Revised Version has it, "the people cast off restraint." The constraining power of a high picture is at once the restraining power of a low one. The people will have pictures. Spiritual principles are great masterpieces. The kingdom of God can be presented only in pictures. When vision fails, the mind

falls back on the gospel as a body of precepts, and this is the law that kills. Jesus wrote nothing, lest men should make a code of his words. He spoke in extravagant language, figurative and proverbial, that he might lift the truth out of the Kingdom of Precepts into the Kingdom of Principles. In short, Jesus spoke in no language; he rather released through himself the eternal truth for spiritual and trustful minds to receive, using the best vehicle he had at hand, the common vernacular, to outline the pictures and guide the spiritual flow.

If all of the ecclesiastical externals upon which our minds have been leaning—churches, creeds, and organizations—were by some unthinkable catastrophe swept away, the great Reality would remain—the vision of the living Christ. When all else should give us the appearance of a sealed tomb, that voice would still find every longing heart saying, “Behold, I go before thee in Galilee.” This is the picture ahead that stirs up the song in the heart, lengthens the reach of faith, and widens the orb of hope.

Take courage, Christian, and labor on. Walk westward with a good will. The west shall dissolve into the east, and the night’s darkness will fade into morning. Labor on, I

say, good servant of Christ, and when, at the end of your final mission, with a song in your heart and a gift in your hand for someone else, you fall in your weariness of age and work, and sleep and dream of angels and faces and joy and music, you may well smile at the picture. Your dream has come true. What you thought was a picture frame is the gate of heaven. Go in! Wonderful living picture!

“So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent till  
The night is gone,  
And with the morn those angel faces smile,  
Which I have loved long since, and lost  
awhile!”



## A PLEA FOR SHOES

“Put . . . shoes on his feet.”—*Luke 15. 22*

CLOTHES, it has been said, are an index to character. Allowing for the few exceptions, we can set down this rule as one of our reliabilities. I am simply entering a plea that from this indicative attire you do not omit shoes. Indeed, we can almost tell what is in the top end of a man by observing what is on his pedal end.

When we are on the early side of forty we are enslaved to the prevailing styles and keep the sizes down, and however much our feet may cry out their cramp, the judge of fashion replies, “We have a law, walk ye in it.” But on the westward side of forty we are more or less lawless in this matter and go in for ground grippers, comfort models, sensible lasts, and orthopædic frames. I have noticed while in shops that sell the latter sort of shoes (for I too have arrived at the age of common sense), the patrons look through the doors and windows upon the street with contempt for the mincing, stilt-legged, high-heeled, pointed-toed, nervous-footed public passing by.

It is no matter whether it be on the higher

or lower levels of the world, whether the inner or outer man, we are born to a world of roads. We are en route. Outwardly it is ever a procedure; inwardly, a perpetual becoming. The law is, Thou must go on, and we go either with or without shoes properly fitted to the foot and geared to the ground.

There are, to be sure, some unconscious travelers who roll through life in sleepers, shades down, no sky; eyes shut, no seeing nature's shrines, shoes off the feet, no inward registering satisfaction of summits reached; always on the levels and through the tunnels. Nothing to see and nothing to say. You'll find them in the stations, gazing at the clock, surrounded with baggage. The gray in their hair signifies that they are at least half way to the terminal. Approach such a one and say, "I hear you are quite a traveler."

"Oh, yes, I've been on my way for fifty years or more," he answers.

"Pray, tell me of your journeys."

"Well, sir, my compartments were mostly of oak and blue plush, and the dining-room service has been good. . . . Where have I been? The itinerary and time tables are in my trunk."

This plainly is traveling in bedroom slippers. Give me travelers that wear shoes. Rous-

seau has said: "Walking has something which animates and stirs my ideas. . . . I need a bodily motion to set my soul in motion. The view of the country, the succession of pleasant prospects, the open air, the good appetite gained by walking. . . . All this frees my spirit, gives audacity to my thought, throws me, as it were, into the immensity of things. . . . I act as a master of all nature."

William Hazlitt found that one of the pleasantest things in the world is going on a journey. He was happiest when he had the green turf beneath his feet, the clear blue sky over his head, and a three hours' march to dinner. He found a joy in losing his identity, his importance, and in holding to the universe by a dish of sweetbreads and known by no other name than "The gentleman in the parlor." This may be traveling in light-soled shoes, but the act of putting aside one's official outfit and going out into the air and sunlight and off the beaten trails into the pleasant byways, fraternizing with life's wholesome amenities, is rejuvenating and good for the soul.

I wish that all those in this city who have too much to do and those who have too little to do, those imprisoned in their mint making money, those who lounge about the lobbies waiting for an opportunity for their wits to

steal a living from the labors of some other man, those who live soft, easy, and self-centered lives, tripping it on Axminster and Brussels, might put shoes on their feet, and "take to the open road."

I beg of you, when you think of spiritual equipment, do not leave out shoes. They did not have comic journals in Bible times, but they had the same distorted life here and there portrayed, and were not without a sense of humor. For instance, one caricature that always caused a laugh was that of a shepherd with a crooked staff in his hands and bare feet. It was when they thought of the thorny, stony ways, and the hot desert sands that shepherds must traverse, that their risibilities were stirred. It had the same effect upon the Oriental mind that some of these advertisements have on ours, of a beautiful lady dressed in evening gown and slippers holding a can of cleanser in one hand and a scrubbing brush in the other.

The religious teachers in Jesus' days were great for turbans, tassels, garment hems, phylacteries, scrolls, law readings, and penalties, but they weren't much on shoes. Their courses of procedure were mostly indoors. Their intricate mental, religious, and legal processes took them up and down, and round and round and round, but never got them out of doors.

But the real prophets wore shoes. The greatest teacher and prophet of them all, He that walked through Galilee and Judæa and managed to get through the difficulties of Samaria, wore shoes. There are new shoes for a new spiritual dispensation. God has affixed wings to every man's shoes but some have mistaken them for boot-straps and have tucked them in.

To be sure, Jesus was an idealist, but an idealist with shoes. Every truth he taught had a footprint in it somewhere. He taught us that we can stand the test and triumph over hell's seducers, but was it enough to say it? Not at all. There were unretreating footprints of the Son of man in the wilderness of Judæa. He taught us we could love the sinful, and there were footprints found on the way to Zacchæus' house and to the outcast adulteress. He told us that we might stride victoriously through our sorrows and tragedies, and he left footprints in Gethsemane. He taught us how much we can love, even with a love that comprehends our enemies, and having said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," He went out and laid his down for both friend and foe, and left many footprints pointing to the Cross on Calvary.

They cast lots for his garment there, but

they could not take his shoes off. He told us to be of good cheer, of strong faith and without fear, in the midst of all the hurts and harms of the earth and even that which is called death; that he will give unto all that come unto him eternal life, and lo! on the other side of Easter, pointing away from the tomb into Galilee, were footprints of the risen Lord.

In many ways Christ was God wearing shoes suited to the ways where men are found. And I do not believe we shall find God in his ways unless we too wear shoes. Men have tried to follow the truths of Jesus with their minds and have failed, finding them moral "impossibles." But where is the man who has followed the feet of Jesus that found them so? My brethren, when we can stop our theorizing and calculating and dare to walk in the footprints of Jesus we shall find that when our feet are right our heads will bring up where they ought to be, and we shall have that mind in us that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." And it is a richly suggestive thing, this speaking of the disciples of Jesus as those that sit at his feet.

The great essential of experience is well-



shod feet for traveling. Not the least important of the commands of the father whose prodigal son came out of death into life, to walk the higher levels and climb the summits, was "Put shoes on his feet." Experience is ever the test of moral and spiritual truth, for there are many things that are not revealed in brains or flesh or blood. Thinking and talking that have no walking in them convince us of nothing. Indeed, I find when I walk into the far reaches of the people's minds and into the secrets of their hearts, in times and under circumstances when they are not interested in arguments as arguments and debates as debates, they embrace all the spiritual simples which are the only real fundamentals, as eagerly and naturally as a child embraces its parent. We may be fully equipped in a head way, but until we put shoes on our feet many a treasure will be undiscovered. Surely, if there were a great prophet in the world to-day interceding for the people as they did in the olden times, crying unto God, "What shall I do with this heady generation? Brains are confused, clashing in controversy; and council halls are filled with conflicting dogmas, concerning thee and thy Son the Christ, as to who he was and what he said," the reply would come down to him, "Put shoes on their feet."

Christ was ever emphasizing the shoe-service in the Gospels. It is not hearing but doing. In the path of love and service our talk is far in advance of our feet; we lean our heads and tongues far over the base line and lose our balance, and hence just there we fall down. I recommend good, stout service shoes. He who walks well among his fellow men needs to say but little.

Have you ever thought of the footless plans that are dumped into the minds of our leaders? Here is an example of a common occurrence. A knock comes to my door.

"Good morning, pastor," says an agile person, with the air of efficiency. "I have come to solicit your co-operation in an organization—"

"Another one?" I interrupt.

"Oh, yes, but this is the greatest and most comprehensive movement ever launched. Our plan is to elevate the general consciousness by a systematic inculcation of the principles conducive to the general welfare of society; a great mass movement."

"When will your big aeroplane come down?" I interject. "Will it land in my neighborhood or any neighborhood? I mean how will this great vague generality get down to earth?"

"We have literature—"

"More literature?" I interrupt again.

"Oh, yes, but of the most illuminating sort. Plans and programs of the organization adaptable to all the departments of the world's activity. A distinct challenge shall be thrown down to each order of society."

Then I say: "Will you please excuse me now, for I have business on hand of very great importance for this hour."

"More important than this, pastor?"

"Yes, indeed," I answer; "there is a children's tea party in my parish and Annie Brady will be there, and Willie Stout will be there, and many other boys and girls, including lame Jimmy, and I must go, drink a cup of tea, and have a romp and talk with them."

"Excuse me for smiling," says my visitor. "I can't understand such a preference."

"I will help you to understand," I reply. "Annie and Willie, and the others are the centers of a social, political, moral, and spiritual world; they are human and are my neighbors, and there at the party they will be, flesh and blood, mind and soul. This neighborhood, like all others, has devils in it that seek to destroy them. They will grow up and soon marry, and there are always plenty of bad but clever boys that know how to make love to beautiful girls, and a number of empty-

headed, whiny, spoilt, silly maidens that have a way with them—the art of setting their caps for strong and upright boys; therefore, I make it my business to mix with them, and at every opportunity point out what is good, pure, and noble in persons, pursuits, and things. Then I edge over to Jimmy, who has a lame leg. He doesn't know yet how lame he really is, and I must fortify him against the day when he suddenly discovers it, lest it overwhelm him. Knowing the story of lame boys, as I do, how many of them first grow sour, then mean, then wicked, I long to teach him how to walk well with a twisted leg; so I shall stop in to-day and say, 'Jimmy, I read the other night a story of a lame boy who became a great and good man.' Do you begin to see? And there are other errands in my shoe service too. And I am so busy preaching a present, personal Christ and urging individuals to walk with him that I have little time for anything else; but when you can get your big movement out of the air, and down to earth where something walks out of it into the hearts of real human beings and makes them better folks, I'll get aboard your scheme. Now for the tea party."

The most important article in a prophet's equipment is shoes—two pairs of them. One,

militant shoes, that make no uncertain footprints, shoes that aim at the enemies' camps and mount the strategic summits and there stand. I was told some time ago that as many as five men in the ministry were asked to speak before an assembly of people on evangelism, and they declined. They were willing to discourse on religious education, social service, moral betterment, and the psychological aspect of things in general; but none would put on the sturdy, daring shoes of an Evangel, climb up to Calvary and proclaim salvation through the blood of the cross. My fellow men, what are we coming to? If this is not our foothold, what is?

The second pair should be shepherd's shoes. The pressure of organizational matters has pushed these off into a dim corner. The value of pastoral work is marked down, and administrative ability is marked up. But it will be a bad day for the Kingdom, when prophets turn to be managers, making their churches religious manufactories and their studies offices. None of us can meet all of our professional obligations, but what, then, are the first things? First a prophet, then a shepherd of the sheep. When our voices are mere pulpit voices, and are not familiar to homes and hearts, we are as hirelings that they will not hear. And every

connectional church must have a care lest in its eagerness to centralize interests, it launch programs that so constantly and insistently employ the pastors as to draw them from the streets, the homes, and the hearts of the people, and thereby destroy that vital relation between pastors and people which is essential and most productive.

Causes in a kingdom of love can expect only scant support when no longer their representatives are men with shepherds' hearts and shepherds' shoes that walk into both the joys and sorrows of the people.

Again. Blessed are the shoes of a friend! And who is a friend but he who stands with you in the last ditch, whom you can lean on in your weakness and your refuge at any time? Many are friendly, but few are friends. Have you ever felt the solitude of a great sorrow, so much like the crucifixion of your own soul on a hill where darkness covers you at noontide and a cold desolating sleet beats down? Not inviting weather for visitors, so you console yourself that many are thinking of you sympathetically. But there's a knock at the door. It is opened and there stand the familiar face and form of a friend. "How did you manage to come to me through all this weather?" you say, and looking down you see that love finds



its way. A real friend has stout shoes sufficient for any hazard, for any march, for any storm.

“Friendship, mysterious cement of the Soul!  
Sweet’ner of life, and solder of Society!  
I owe thee much—”

Let me be a pedestrian and be known as such. Whether any part of the world judges me to have a progressive head, I do not know, nor do I care; but God forbid that any man shall say I have unprogressive feet. Our thoughts and theories vanish, but footprints—there they are. Study them well; trace them out, and see if they travel out a ministry of God to men. Have they pointed truthward and heavenward? Happy shall I be, if to my beloveds and posterity I can leave the legacy of well-worn, weather-beaten, service-scuffed shoes at the foot of Christ’s cross, with this brief statement: “My shoes have brought me to this post; I have taken them off at its foot, I am done with them now. I’ve gone upstairs to a new wardrobe.”

## “REMEMBER MY BONDS”

“The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.”—*Colossians 4. 18.*

THE chain wouldn't reach. I mean the chain that was fastened to the right forearm of Paul and the left forearm of the Roman soldier. Paul was a prisoner in Rome for Christ's sake. We don't know where the guardhouse was, but wherever and whatever it was, it was not a hermitage. Slaves and members of Cæsar's household stole in from their rather wintry social weather with its indifferent sky where no man cared for their souls, to be warmed in the glow of Paul's radiant heart. If this man, worn with stress and strain, scarred and bruised with the hardships of service, bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus upon his body, would but smile on them, it was worth more than Cæsar's pay for a fortnight. I fancy the relief guard never came late, rather early, eager to be chained to this man of God whose like he had never seen nor heard before.

Paul had it in his heart to write to the church at Colosse, but could not do it with

his own hand, for his eyes were poor, so his amanuensis sat near recording. And for a time the room was dimmed, bonds and chains forgotten. Paul was enrapt with Christ. In haste the reed flew over the parchment, as the apostle's soul took wings and soared through the glories, touched the summits of faith, then changed wings for shoes and tenderly moved through the paths of human passions—its fortitudes and weaknesses—and stopped at many individual hearts with a word of blessing. Having finished the message he asked for the stylus to add a postscript, "The salutation of me, Paul, with my own hand"—the chain rubs against the edge of the table; it didn't quite reach. It broke the spell. Having set forth the glorious liberties of Jesus Christ, the contrasting his own helplessness and limitations momentarily jolted his spirit. He then asked the guard to come nearer and he added: "Remember my bonds. Grace be with you."

Surely the Colossians read the letter and marveled at its eloquence and spiritual flights, and just as surely were they stirred and moved by the postscript. Their great apostle in bonds! They knew he could free himself by forsaking Christ. He could seek out Nero and say: "I'm weary of this hardship and tor-

ture; more than my share have I suffered. I recant all I've said. I reject Jesus of Nazareth. Hereafter I claim the rights of my Roman citizenship and all the comforts and privileges involved. An office in the Sanhedrin is awaiting me, a more than comfortable living in the genius of my mind, together with the honor and fame of all Jewry." But, no, in some house in a side street of Rome, this prisoner for Christ sits in the shadow of his doom, writing in effect, "Christ is all and in all. . . . Remember my bonds."

I have been wondering what would happen if, to-morrow, some enraged and atheistic Torquemada in full authority and power should fall on our world, demanding that every man reject his idol and his god, whatever or whoever that god may be, or meet death at the point of his fateful weapon. Would not many of these wayside altars and these hilltop idols be swept away? Would not scores of these soft-headed false prophets, silly sentimentalists and scallawags that preach strange doctrines in pink rooms of hotels disappear under the cover of night with their creeds and cults? They would. But, even yet, on the highest hill would remain the vision of the crucified Christ, and even yet at its base in row after row and file upon file would stand a company

of dauntless, fearless Christian men and women, encouraged by the spirits of Stephen and Paul, who hold their lives not dear for Christ's sake, and count it all joy to fall and die true to him, while crying out loudly to their successors, "Remember our bonds."

✓ It is a far cry from that crowd to our nominal saints, and that Christless, worship-wanting lot, that still lay claim to the name of Christian by virtue of an inscription in a church record. Some tell the preacher what an effort it was to attend divine service, or what they had to forego to make a gift to the Kingdom. Others there are who never enter the doors of the sanctuary, nor bow at the altar, nor give a pittance, but sift the Sabbath away in chaff, vain chatter, and a sluffing slumber. Come, Epaphras, come, bear these words down all our streets; cry them through the doors and walls where these cry-babies and coddlings sit; cry them out on the thresholds of soft ease and selfish ingratitude, these words of this weather-beaten, scar-marked prisoner for Christ, "Remember my bonds!"

"I would not hand a baby face,  
Smoother and unscarred, to God on high  
And say: 'Hereon you find no trace  
Of living, now I come to die';

No, battered up and down the ways,  
 I give him back this proof of me;  
 Record of keen, tumultuous days,  
 Life's scars for man and God to see!"<sup>1</sup>

To my knowledge Paul has made no inventory of items that were as loss to him and gain to Christ, and if any man undertake such a listing, permit me this suggestion: near the beginning write in "My bonds," for as such they turned out to be. "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."

Paul, fastened to the Roman guard, is but a symbol of our own milder form of bondage. Even as the baneful bonds were transmuted into a blessing, so our rough iron manacles are later worn as bracelets of fine gold. Always more or less are we tied to a guard. We feel the grip of childhood's discipline. We tug away at the end of the tether until we are chafed. Did not your youth stamp its foot in a temper wanting to know why a young fellow

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Burton.



can't do as he pleases? And many times with a sapling wisdom did he not interpret to himself that bit of Holy Writ, "And a man's foes shall be those of his own household," as meaning parents on particular occasions—to himself, I say, for some potent and impressive reasons best known to himself? But afterward in the years of his early manhood he thanks God and his elders when he remembers his bonds.

Then, in that ceaseless evolution, wherein the son becomes the citizen, he finds himself chained to a big uniformed guard called Law. I presume there are few of us who ever stop to consider in the course of making our way in the world what a debt is due to that faithful old guard sitting in the center of civilization holding that taut check-rein in his hand, constituting the radius that measures out the full circle of men's liberties.

But some men are not content with their rights and are forever tugging at the leash and breaking through the extremities. Our circuit courts are kept up at great expense on the outer circumference to catch and deal with them. The leash seems to tame their liberties and they long for license. Their heads and hearts are hanging over the fence and they finally break through. We have free thinkers, free lovers, free speakers, free livers, and more

than a hundred varieties of the extraneous minds and extraordinary actors, mostly bad; and when we once see these custom-despisers, these æsthetic and clod-hopping outlaws and self-determinists, who have finally found expression for their free-as-nature notions in roguery, intrigue, treason, murder, theft, adultery, and insanity, we thank God and take courage when we remember our bonds.

Again, in the matter of personal limitations we are reminded of the length of the chain, and its fastening to certain unalterable facts. There is no magic known to man whereby two talents can be changed to ten. There was a period some years ago when the human will was enthroned. All power was given to it. Philosophy too has its fads. The present day's thinking bows no more to self-volition as an absolute monarch, but conceives will power to be the enactment of the inner democracy. The sum total of our moral impulses. I recall that on one occasion, one of my school teachers announced to the class that whatever one wills to be, can be; or do, it can be done; to have, it can be had. If I remember aright, we were studying “The Courtship of Miles Standish,” and that, I think, inclined her to clothe her philosophy in romance, and she said this right out in class: “Whatever maiden a young man

desires to win to his heart, woo and wed, he can do it." It was a most interesting proclamation for a group of nineteen-year-old boys; and it was a most comforting piece of information for me personally, for I had been having a little trouble along that line. I won't ask the men present here this morning whether they have found this assertion to be true, because I know you will all answer in the affirmative, and thereby some of you will be what the psalmist in his haste said all men were. However, I thought it was a fine, generous, and hopeful thing for her to so express herself, for apparently the masculine wills had willed all around her, but not at her, for she was a maiden lady of fifty and still unwilling.

The principle is wrong. All of our dreams do not come true, nor are all our volitions successful and sure. The limit of personal power and ability in any field is fixed. We are discontented until we reach it, and discontented when we exceed it. Happy is that man who discovers his radius, describes his own circle, and intensifies and beautifies all within; there is success. A good farmer is just as successful as a good lawyer, and a shiftless merchant as bad as a shoddy poet; and fine workmen in the stuffs are as honorable in the sight of God and men as men that frame great thoughts.

Two talents well invested is as creditable performance as ten. Let each man remember his bonds and glorify his lot.

Now, may I ask you to change places and imagine yourself at the guard's end of the chain. You are not now tied to the law, but to a great apostleship. If before you felt the restraint of earthly powers, and willingly perhaps, you now begin to feel the tug of the heavenly things; you are now bound to a great mission. Remember the bonds. Paul's mind moved majestically through the mysteries of God, and journeyed far in the abstract regions of love, faith, and hope. The spiritual height and the human breadth of his sphere were as the upright and transom of the cross that emblemized his mission; the saving of all men by all means through the blood of Christ.

The abstract crystallized into the concrete. He was never carried away with philosophy as philosophy. Powers invisible were as vital emanations from his living, loving, and abiding Lord. Paul was bound mind, body, and soul to Christ, and when he looked at the world through him he saw something more than vast good or evil mass movements, to be answered to with mere polysyllabic speech. It was not the vague, indefinite concept, but the image of

men that was ever in Paul's eye. His high, full vision tells us he was a spiritual strategist; his scars, that he was a warrior in the fighting line and in the trenches. His was the soul of a shepherd whose yearning found its object, and his shoulders were bent from bearing so many lost lambs back to the fold; or of a master-pilot who guided those unaccustomed to the new way. He knew that the Kingdom would not be safeguarded from shipwreck by multiplying the fog horns, but by making good pilots. After sweeping the heavens, and things invisible, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers; after exalting Christ, the image of the invisible God, his mind falls with great and tender concern on Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Marcus, Justus, Epaphras, Demas, Nymphas, and Archippus. Linked to the glories were these comparatively unimportant people. To Nero and the authorities they were a bit of the mass, a pinch of the tax-paying lump, and they didn't care a tinker's dam about them. To Paul they were souls, friends, children of God; he loved them and remembered them.

When your conception of the kingdom of God runs to mass impressions, forces, movements, and is not bounded by the effulgence, power, personality, and life of the living Christ,

it is fit material for revision. When your mission links up to vague and depersonalized causes, and loses features, faces, forms, and heart cries, it is no apostleship like Paul's. It is like moving clouds that never drip rain, or white-winged ships that never come to port. As ministers to men, let us remember our bonds.

And does not being fastened at the guard's end of the chain, to an apostleship that was ever saying, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and, again, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," suggest the short chain that binds us to the All-Life? How easily and suddenly Time's chain snaps, and we are released, to be linked in that eternal bond.

"Fool! All that is at all,  
Lasts ever, past recall;  
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand  
sure:  
What entered into thee,  
*That* was, is, and shall be;  
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and  
clay endure."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Browning, "Rabbi Ben Ezra."



Durable and sure is the golden chain that binds, in life, in death, our souls to God; that gradually draws through time us journeymen to our everlasting home in heaven. Our real sonship and citizenship are there. So when our day is closing, and the sun is setting, and friends are weeping, and angels are singing, and God is calling, comfort them, even comfort them by saying, "Weep not, but remember my bonds!"

## TWELVE HOURS

“Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?”

JESUS was apparently quoting a proverb here. The full strength of a quotation, of course, never resides altogether in its own form, truth, and beauty. This may be likened to an unset gem on the jeweler's velvet. The full force includes the connection, or its setting. Mark the aptness of this proverb here.

The disciples were dissuading Jesus from returning to Judæa, whither he was bent on going, having received word of the critical illness of Lazarus, his dear friend. They would restrain him for his sake and theirs, saying: “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?” They had sufficient evidence to more than suspect it would be a perilous journey. Those in authority were seeking his life; but not one of them dared to retrench in the presence of the noble fearlessness of Jesus, that rushed out of his words and captured their manhood. “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But

if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

In effect, he said that his life was a mission preserved in its own divine purpose and its pursuance in doing the Father's will. He was like a man walking in the daylight, seeing where to walk between the rising and setting sun, and could not stumble or fall. There are twelve hours in his life and theirs, and night shall not come until the Father's will be accomplished. But he who has no mission, no inner light, no constant compelling and increasing purpose, is an alien vagrant stumbling over some pointless and useless road in the dark. So have no fear; walk worthily and walk well and leave all the rest to Heaven.

It is quite reasonable to ask what is the nature and content of this twelve-hour space. How are we to know and do the will of God? And what may be the twelve-hour goal of it? What may mean this strange environment of visibles and invisibles that we inherit? Is the outer world's command to be authoritative or is it the inner man that creates his universe? Who has the verdict? Our philosophers have been busy on these problems for centuries, and they are still unsolved. Des Cartes with his "*Cogito, ergo sum*" can see no hope for a revelation of truth save by a pro-

gressive process of reasoning. On the other hand, there are those who repudiate this rational idealism and declare for the authority of the natural and spiritual intuition. Not reason but feeling, they say, is the key quality for the finding of life's meanings and ultimates. And there is the other school of materialists who interpret man and his life from environment.

Life is the gift to all people, and it is apparent that their possession of it, their proper use of it, their enjoyment of it, do not depend upon their knowledge of it as taught by Des Cartes, Kant, Locke, Schopenhauer, Spencer, and Hegel. Few can read them and fewer yet understand even though they read. Must we say, therefore, they are without their light of day? It is well for our thinkers to continue their attempts to solve the great riddle, but we do not need to wait on their conclusions, for God has brought life and immortality to light in Jesus Christ our Lord. He is Alpha and Omega; and when our philosophers reach the end of their quests, providing they do not go astray, there will emerge from their abstractions and move step by step through their syllogisms, the image of a Divine-human Person, as the answer to all minds and hearts of a whole world of people.

One cannot behold the spatial sweep of life's day, of those interminable mysteries of things and objects leaping into thoughts, of conceptions fashioning their images, of sleep, of love, of pain and sorrow, of nature, that living garment of God, of the unspeakable and tenacious hope in the everlasting, without surmising that life itself is both a sacrament and a mission; that the sacred lies as deep in all things and in all relations of all things as it does in religion. We shall be a better people, less meticulous, narrow, and petty, when we can break through our binding preconceptions and find God otherwheres than in our religious laws.

All life is a sacrament. The sacramental altar has two horns, which if a man grasp, he is assured and safe. God has raised them up as hills in the Holy Land, that they might throw their spiritual realities into the very soul. I speak of Calvary and Transfiguration.

Your death died on the cross with Christ, and you begin your life on the eternal side of the tomb. Calvary is the grave of your death. I spend a good deal of time telling people that their death is dead. Even Christians do not seem to know it. Let no man live any more against his own death. If you haven't done it yet, go out and die. Every man ought to do it early and get it out of the way. If he doesn't

he will be stumbling over it and tarrying at it. Give up all fear of death. Let it have no place in life. If your purpose be good and right, you have full twelve hours to live, and you don't need to fear the stones, but will go into Judæa, where you ought to go.

Sir Thomas Browne thanks God for his dreams, and Stevenson speaks somewhere of his brownies that, as he slept, gave him plots for stories and even chapter constructions. I too am disposed to thank God for a dream I had not long ago. I dreamed I was dead and attended my own funeral. Death itself seemed to have no place in the picture; there was no struggle and no pang, which makes me think that the dream-version is truer than our traditional notions of death. The brownies seemed to say in concert, "There is no death." It was the funeral that I saw. There were not so many present as I expected, and, of course, that was disappointing. And while I noted that none seemed to be hilariously joyful over my departure, I could not sufficiently penetrate the funereal decorum to discover whether they were heartily sorry either. All seemed to preserve a solemn neutrality. As an event it did not impress me favorably and certainly did not warrant spending too much time arranging for. And while it was only a



dream, the brownies did some good work for me. I woke up determined to embrace the full twelve hours, insure myself in two worlds, and let the end take care of itself.

The measure of every life is in the fullness of it. The years may not be as many as we reckoned on, but though they fall away, the full-orbed spirit stands forever for God and man to see. He who made us and dreamed his high purpose in us, holds in heaven the complete round of our life in dotted lines, and though the sharp shear in the vicissitudes cut off the years, if the smallest arc be retraced, that is enough to proclaim the full circumference, and God will give us credit for the whole. It is better to risk going into Judæa and have a tragic triumph there than to nurse the body along through a few more years in some inglorious retreat. Never lose your grip on the cross of Jesus Christ; see it out of every window of your mind and soul, home, and work shop, knowing your death died there, and then address your task singing a hopeful song of a full and fearless day.

But this horn of the altar invisible would be meaningless without the other. The cross is the starting point, the vision on transfiguration, the goal. It will be noted we have reversed the chronological order as it is in his-

tory, but in the spiritual kingdom the cross is first, and the transfiguration but a foregleam of the great reality of a living, calling, abiding Christ, when his kingdom should be lifted completely off of historic incidents and place. Moses, the exponent of the law, spoke, and Elijah, of the prophets, but Simon's suggestion was rejected. Tabernacles were not to be built there for their abiding. Both Moses and Elijah, law and prophecy, disappeared; they are but the means to the end; and none remained save Jesus only; our divine-human Kinsman, who is of God and us. He who sees Jesus cannot go astray; he who grasps Jesus cannot fall away. All truth is in him, all of life and the Very Way. Are there not twelve hours in the day? Is not Christ standing before you as your Eternal Whither? He is. Then rejoice and be glad, labor and live and fear not.

This saying seems to have in it a steady counteraction, much like the centrifugal and centripetal forces in all moving bodies. There are twelve hours, so don't be in too great haste; but there are only twelve, so give no place to idleness, for the night soon comes, when man's work is done.

The greater danger is in this—in overworking and overtaxing the future. None of us is a

match for nature. We are not going to command the sun to stand still or time to abide in eternal spring. God knows most of us are trying to. A peep into the sandglass throws some people into a panic, and they make a desperate and frantic search for the Fountain of Youth. Not finding an elixir to take internally, they manufacture one to put on the outside, and it is remarkable—indeed, the talk of the time—how many old boys and girls there are at the May Party. Posing as a perpetual guest is one thing, and running around the May Pole is another! A November physique in a spring dress is still an autumnal product; it is sure to announce it when it begins to sing, "I'm to be queen of the May, mother." We are not going to change God's seasons; even the attempt is costly. Note how God has legislated to keep spring spring in the industrial world, and when burdens for men's backs are laid on little boys the penalty must be paid. There is a law of proportion, of capacity, of limit, and there is no magic known that can change it.

Don't crowd and cram your life so. You may have it all figured out how much of a pile you must have at fifty, and your feverish preparation for a later, larger living is likely to send you sprawling on the hither side of your

own stack. The daily obituary column is full of such cases. Who can bring on evening at midday, or midday in the morning? Why spend the whole twelve hours preparing for the thirteenth that doesn't come?

It is prudent, to be sure, to lay up for a rainy day, as we say, but unless my observations have been altogether misleading, the idea of most of these rainy-day people is a ceaseless storm and an unsubsiding flood. And they have a rainy-day look, rainy-day thoughts, and see little sunshine, and have almost none of the joys of life's clear weather. It isn't much fun living out a whole life in an ark, pitched without and within. My judgment is that the case is worse than that; they get prematurely drowned in their self-provoked bad weather before they get it built.

Everywhere I look—into the sky, over the fields, into forests, into the faces and hearts of my friends—I find unmistakable intimations that God meant us to enjoy life, that eternally fresh, colorful, and songful life, real life, true life, and not always be found among its containers and pottery, laying up in storehouses for an overestimated future.

There are twelve hours in the day, so let us enjoy God in Christ Jesus, while it is day, penetrating the kingdom of law and teaching

to find Christ in the kingdom of love and truth and beauty. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." What can be lovelier than our divine sonship, than our fellowship with the heavenly Father, here and now, to-day?

There is a certain trend in some religious teaching that I have never been able to follow. I reject it. It is that which makes Christ an agent, and his utterances as a road or a route, leading to some goal; secret approaches and long, difficult introductions to something higher and better than himself. I have not gathered this from our common figures of speech, in which disciples are called followers, but, rather, by a philosophic attitude of mind impressed upon me. Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life." "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." And, strange to say, when we get away from the mysticism of the New Testament, the truth is distorted and strained. Pray, what, according to these teachers, does the guidance bring us to? Abstract truth, or some remote but shining ideal? Must we forsake life, and our immortality brought to life, for our dream-philosophy again? Christ and that which is spoken of in the gospel *is* life. It emerges everywhere. From "Come, Simon,"

to "Lazarus, come forth!" it is life; from "Get thee behind me, Satan," in the wilderness to "Peace be unto you," on the other side of the tomb, it is life. O teachers, to whom else can we go? Christ is the word of eternal life. And I am convinced of this, that we would have a more vital experience in our own selves and in our churches, if we would talk less and think less of Christian ideals as such, and religious abstractions, as such, and move out to meet and embrace the living, personal Jesus.

There are twelve hours in the world's day to live and walk with God in. God is here, the light and music of heaven are here, just as much of it as this mortality can contain; angels do flutter in these hearts. Doves that soar out over the deeps, then return to poise on the pediment or gable of some temple or house of commerce and trade suggest a curious contact when you come to think of it, but think of God and us walking together in the streets, through all the hours of life's day!

Think of God keeping step with us as we cross the Mount Pleasants, the Fields of Meditation, and walk through Shadow Valleys; seeing with his eyes, until we see our visible world like a village nestling at the foot of a majestic Alp and arched with an everlasting sky. Like towns that dress out in their best



when a royal visitor enters, so all the world is glorified when God and we walk together. And when night comes on he says: "You have walked well to-day and you are tired. Now lay your head on your Father's breast and he will carry you on." And the last thing we hear is the clock striking twelve, and an Alpine horn echoing and re-echoing among the distant hills, and an evening song, and the last thing we feel is the warm, mellow glow of a setting sun, and the next thing we know it is morning.

## “TAKE UP THY BED!”

“Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.”—*John 5. 8.*

ONE of the finest and most enheartening sights in this world is a man carrying his bed on his back. Understand me, I do not mean the visible mattress rolled up and projecting from the shoulders of a man cured of his affliction, dismissed from further ministration and care, going down the road, homeward, as it was in the case of this patient at the Bethesda pool. This case is but an indicator. I mean, rather, the people you meet on your own streets, in all the working places of the earth, who live and move in a world not known to the common and casual eye, for its exuberant joy, red-blooded health, or well-to-do-ness, who from the show of their faces and the very exhalation of their personal spirits impress you at once as bed-bearing people.

Such people never fail to move me. There is a complacence about them that fits them like a serviceable garment with a warp of high-toned stoicism and a woof of a tenacious trust in human life, colored withal with a joy of living. They are usually past middle life, when the

finer dream fabrics which the inner angel spun out in those earlier, romanceful years, with some very definite designs of success backgrounded with a bright hope, have faded out, or have been torn and tattered with the high winds and bad weathers of fortune. Nothing remains but the naked angel who has sought refuge far within, where no more the thieves can steal or corruptions do their work. It appears to the purblind world that all such have good reason to take their beds. But they don't!

Whether these surviving angels are appointed as ambassadors to lodge in the breast and speak power-fraught words, and create cheerful visions like mirages thrown up from the deserts, that succeed in turning pauperish circumstances into something princely, I do not know. Whether it is more human than that, and like some noble, devoted, but unsuccessful parent that counts it all joy to drudge on for the sake of the growing child, they carry on for the angel's sake, I do not know. I do know that there is a heroism that calls and shouts, actually shouts, and my heart cries out, "Bravo!"

When Paul wrote to the Galatians, "For each man shall bear his own burden," and, again, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ," I am sure he meant

by burdens, beds. Invisible though they be, they hang over the back, and every man can move up abreast, and quietly and almost imperceptibly lift his shoulders to the load so that the bearer is conscious of nothing save the lightening of it. Fine untrumpeted spiritual finesse!

It is not those ill successes that report themselves in low financial figures, sending many people prostrated to their beds, that I wish to speak of in particular this morning. But, after all, that is something. To have planned with large dreams and long education a prosperous commercial life, to have labored in the same degree and yet fail, is a most disappointing thing. But hear this. To have had much and suddenly lost it all, and still carry, with a buoyant and debonair gait, the bed that friends said you would be lying in and crying in, is a startling, godlike thing that brings down the plaudit of Heaven. Perhaps one sees a nobler vision on the farther untrammelled horizon than he saw on the nearer one, or it may be the assailing world beats him back in retreat until he actually falls upon his own inner wealth-reserve he did not know he had.

Let those in this extremity thank God they are not found in the other. It is better to

brush up the old clothes, sponge and press the shiny serge for another season, live in a hall bedroom, and have the light of life falling on the countenance and a relish for the curious, baffling romance of the future, than to wrap the senses, mind, and soul in a winding sheet of gold and live and die in a safe-deposit vault. May God deliver us from such a dead-alive existence!

The fact is that there are many sick people whose veins are scant of life, who ought to be in bed, who, rather, are furiously pushing and pulling, gouging and grinding, always ill at ease, consumed away, inch by inch, with ambition's burning fever. People with such a high temperature ought to be in bed. They need rest and repose and a change. Little do they heed in their delirium the wiser counselor who might dare to suggest a trip around the world, of the up-and-around direction, penetrating a vaster and more altitudinous kingdom than their own, where visions, grander than our seas and summits can furnish, will fall peacefully upon the soul, and call up that music smothered down by layer and layer of things, much as the gloriously lowering of a Swiss evening calls up the echoing horns from all the valleys below.

This incident at Bethesda suggests another

similar one. Jesus had cured a man with the palsy, on the Sabbath day, to whom he said, “Take up thy bed and walk.” The carping, cheeseparing scribes were rebuking him for his breach of the sabbath law in bidding a man to bear his bed on his back. Jesus replied, “Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?” While it is not the literal interpretation, there is a suggestion here that Jesus is our Lord of life. Not only is he our Redeemer, who made propitiation for our sins by his blood, shed on Calvary, but the Divine Physician to all the redeemed also. How much they need him too! While I was thinking of this, that phrase of the psalmist came into my mind with a fresh and consoling force, “He restoreth my soul.”

The human understanding, strange to say, is a poor appraiser of values. It peers at the showwindows and does its estimating on the strength of what it sees at a glance. It is ever the same set of hackneyed correlatives, the rich or poor, big or little, full or empty, happy or miserable. It puts intrinsic values upon symbols. What nonsense! It sees none of the grim and tearful courages, for it has insufficient inspective power to lay bare the sorrows of the human heart.



The secret sorrows of the human heart—they wail around me while I speak. There is a long catalogue of them, and for the most part we leave the novelist to treat and expose them, and sometimes they are treated very badly. Let me speak tenderly now of these that bear heavy invisible beds. Some there are who have prayed and longed for a child to come into the home, but none has come, and yet they must live in a world filled with the faces and voices of children. They swallow hard and smile at the music of it. Others have had them and lost them, and they too must live out their lives among the same faces and voices; they too swallow hard several times and smile and love the music. Families are broken, sometimes by death, and sometimes by ugly and cruel alienations. The early romance is the first touched and then torn by tragedy and hearts go bleeding clear down to the grave. Again, affections, real, passionate and eternal, have been smitten and pried apart before the nuptial chime sounded. A frost has nipped the bud—a frost in spring. All life has to be lived yet with a broken heart. They must live on in a world ever singing its love song. What do they do, these courageous hearts? They wipe the wet and salty film from their eyes and join in the applause, like one who draws out some me-

mento from an inner pocket, tearfully and wistfully looks at it, and gently puts it back again to keep. Bravo, bravo, you bed-bearing people!

Take a thought for this too. A child is nursed and trained, with a parental love and care that even poets despair of describing. A care that watches and prays and guides wisely and tactfully through that most perilous period we call adolescence, but in spite of all the child sinks into hell. Think of it! After years of deep, passionate, sacrificing love. Oh, the sorrow of this thing; the wakeful, restless, red-eyed nights of the parents! Every footfall on the street is startling; there are impish faces in the dose-dreams; agonies and cold sweats. That is not all. The same demon that drew the child into degradation would draw the parents into despair. Little does the devil care how we fall away from God. "Take to your bed," he says with a leer, "and wrap yourself in a black sheet;" but they, with a lingering hope in their faces like a candle-lit window making a gleam-path in the night for the prodigal's return, reply: "No, our beds are heavy, but they are still on our backs. The day is not all spent yet." Hearts courageous! I know who your burden bearer is—he is a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Most bed-ridden people are there with trifling ailments. It is to those who are really sick that the Great Physician comes and says: "Would'st thou be made whole? Rise, take up thy bed and walk." Sometimes I think these bed-ridden people are not in beds at all, but in cribs. Immature children, crying for baublelike wants, and in a feverish temper because they do not get them. These cried-for wants seem to take the judgment away from the blessings we already have at hand.

My friends, if I know that that which holds the source of my joy in this world is linked to me, a loving, loyal human heart, my bed is on my back, and my back is not on my bed. While I have a God in heaven and a friend in the earth I am fit for the world. If I should fail to-morrow, I would not cry. If I were forced to fare on the earth's fag-ends, and had little to share (which alone could disturb me), and should at the end of some weary, unprofitable day take my child out to some quiet solitude and say: "Now, my son, your father has not succeeded as he dreamed and planned. In spite of prayer and industry things have gone bad. The only thing that troubles me is that you can't have what other boys have; but I hope, my son, that it will make no difference in your affections for your father," then to

hear him say, "Never mind, dad, I love you the better for it; and though we go to the poorhouse, we shall be pals and lovers forever"—well, although the lad could not add a dollar to the scanty fund, he has made me rich. The music in his word is not a funeral march, not at all, but music by which we may again march up to the world.

More than that, if even those that I thought loved me forsake me, whether it be for poverty, calamity, sickness, or sorrow, I'll stand with no intention of falling in my bed. While a cross stands on Calvary my soul shall not die within me. They hanged the Son of God upon a tree, and they can do no worse with me. Let me have the mind of Christ in me, and though they spike me, I'll be standing. It may look from the world's viewpoint that my back is on that cruel bed, but it is not; the bed is on my back, and no toll-taking Cæsar can stand in his kingdom and say, "The poor, doomed wretch is done for," for, outdrowning it, will sound the voice of Christ, saying: "Would'st thou be made whole? Rise, take up thy bed and walk." And I'll walk, bed and all, out of the earth into heaven. And the angels will sing and clap their hands, and I ask, "What is this great plaudit about?"

"The bed," they shout: "the bed."

"The bed," I reply; "strange indeed; they scorn it down on the earth."

There is a piece of pathetic humor in this incident that seems richly suggestive to me. This poor man had been in his disease thirty-eight years. Day after day he had come to the Bethesda pool, and sat at the edge of the water and watched its surface. There was a tradition that an angel would stir it and give the water curative properties and the man who was first in the water would receive all the virtue of the cure. But this man was out of luck. At every disturbance some one, abler, more agile than he, would push in ahead of him. With undaunted patience he would lie on his mattress again, peering at the sheen of the pool. Then a Man appeared at his side, dressed as he was dressed, spoke the language he spoke, and quietly said, "Would'st thou be made whole?" I can see the man craning his neck to get a view of the Speaker. His face bore the look of sufferance and suspicion, as if it would say, "Are you another one of those impostors that would tantalize a poor old man like me?" But there was something compelling in the voice. Jesus listened to his case and said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk!" He arose and walked.

Tell me now, are not most of our want-

prayers aimed at a prayer-answer superstition? Isn't there a tradition abroad that something must be stirred up, and angels appear with boons fresh from heaven, or a new door of opportunity open and some new factor or fortune arrive? And what a state of mind we fall in when we hear of arrivals, but not for us! When someone less needy appears to be more successful with heaven and earth, "That's the way of it," we moan, "those that have the strength to get to the water get the cure, and those less fortunate must suffer on," and we terminate our unavailing, continued prayers with envy, like an ugly knot in a string. Little heed do we give to that divine-like spirit in the peasant's seamless robe, so to speak; to that power that is clothed with the situation itself; I repeat it, to that power within, wrapped in our own circumstance, whispering "Would'st thou be made whole?" . . . "Arise, take up thy bed and walk!"

Whether God is the manager of this great factory where men are in the making, or has leased it to Law, I do not know. This I do know: if it is so leased, it is to "Law, limited." This much is clear; when that which is but clay and of the earth, earthy, mere selfness and senses, goes through the machinery, the striking hammers and grinding wheels beat it



to pieces for an inevitable disintegration, but when gold goes through it fares differently. That which destroys the one pounds and fashions the other into a nobler and more beautiful form. Although the prospective container, planned for a capacious catch-all, grows less and less, it diminishes into the graceful stem of a chalice that widens out toward heaven for the holding of the higher distillations that warm the heart and rejoice the soul.

The noblest people in this world are those who bear invisible beds on their backs. Like laborers they are, singing on their homeward way on the road that skirts the three great mountains, Faith, Hope, Love, which throw back and amplify the courage in the song for all the world to hear and find and follow in its train.

God is not concerned about our standards of big and little, rich and poor, full and empty, wise or illiterate. His concern is the growing of great souls for eternity. A whole lifetime may be required for it here, and all sorts of circumstances too. Hear me; if one of those great spirits is in its making in your breast, or in your house, thank God. Don't interfere; hold not off the divine hand, and don't cry so much about the litter it is making. What,

after all, is a mere thorn in the flesh, an affliction or a misfortune, or a meager share of barley loaves, compared to this achievement! Be calm while God is trying to tune you in to life eternal and love everlasting. Worn faces are often windows through which the heavenly visions shine upon our streets, and broken hearts the troubadours of high and uplifting songs.

"Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,  
We have hard work to do and loads to lift.  
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'Tis God's gift.

Be strong! Be strong!"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maltbie D. Babcock. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

## ALL WE LIKE SHEPHERDS (Christmas Sermon)

“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.”—*Luke 2. 9.*

It is to be noted that a star appeared to the Magi and a glory shone round about the shepherds. God's signs are not the same for all men. The sage intellectualists, with their attenuated and finely focused vision, would have, in a sense, missed the glory, or set it down as a cataclysmic phenomenon and resumed their pursuit among their reliable old stars. Here was the field in which they must be convinced of the truth, if anywhere. It seems to be the case with intellectualists that unless something moves out of their zone of problematics, mathematics, and wonders, they do not follow, or at best tardily. There must be a deal of time spent in experimentation to get that which they deem to be the extraordinary into their rational system and tuned to their assumptions. Their country is more remote. The sages arrive after the shepherds. The records show that comparatively few old or sophisticated minds manage to get out of their obser-

vations and on to Bethlehem on time. They are swamped with unfinished business. They have wonders of their own to attend to.

How rare and beautiful are those lines written by a Christian scholar from a university and how true withal!—

“And let those learn who here shall meet,  
True wisdom is with reverence crowned,  
And science walks with humble feet  
To find the God that faith hath found.”<sup>1</sup>

The glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds. Now, it is not to be supposed that these shepherds were clod-brained stupidities, but men with a native intelligence, probably on a par with the Magi. Theirs was a knowledge, however, that was not cured and formulated, but nicely and warmly mixed with the senses in that pliable merger found in younger or at least simpler life.

We shall think this morning of the Magi and shepherds, not as two distinct classes of men, but of two conditions of the same mortal. We are shepherds before we are sages. David was a singing, luting, daring shepherd lad before he was a king and sage of Israel, and the stuff of the shepherd was what most of his later wisdom was made of. We are born

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<sup>1</sup> Caleb T. Winchester.

for wonders and have an ear for the angel's voice, a soul for a falling and spreading glory, in a greater degree than most of us realize; and if we can retain it, refuse to have this power deadened by the later sophisticating arts, we shall have little trouble with a moving star in our sager years. We shall see in it the color and substance of the glory that was ours when we came to earth, that has never departed from us.

It is written that the common people heard Jesus gladly, not because they were obtuse, or his message was peculiarly fitted to the illiterate and the poor, but that they were still in possession of that common life and common sense, unbiased minds and fresh eyes, that hold a closer and more vital kinship with the spiritual truth than did most of the minds that were tutored in the schools of religion and philosophy of that day.

It would be well for us in our day to remember that it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. The education of the heart is by different courses and a different board of faculty than the education of the mind, and not knowing this many have had a titanic struggle to save their souls in the process of saving their minds. Let us have more of those rare fellows who refuse to surrender

life's simples at the door of the school, and will not allow their souls to become dependents upon a set of specialized knowledge. These are they that add to their faith knowledge, rather than substitute knowledge for faith.

There is little use of glory shining round about a man incased in an armor with a telescope or a microscope sticking out of a squinting eye. Glory shines round about exposed souls with open pores to take in the wonder of it. When the light shone out of heaven it did not point a beam into the Temple to penetrate the Pharisees and scribes, but silently fell upon the simple-souled shepherds. A vast orb it was and full of wonders. It is a great thing to behold wonder as wonder. Had the shepherds been told that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, I am sure they would have believed it. The sages are more likely to doubt it.

It is a question in my mind whether a man who does not reject all the miracles can consistently disbelieve in the virgin birth, except perhaps, on one ground, the historical. The evidences may not be sufficient to substantiate it as a credible event for him, and yet he may have a mystery-embracing mind. My own research in the matter convinces me that historical evidences in favor of it outweigh those



against it. However, no man is damned for not believing it, nor is it a sign of a nice and selective intellectuality to reject it. Because some Herr Doctor Schnickelheimer of Berlin and the Reverend Doctor Hersfordshire of Oxford have collaborated in a weighty volume to wag their heads against the credibility of the virgin birth, with a theological wag in chapter one, and a historical wag in chapter two, and a biological wag in chapter three, and a psychological wag in chapter four, and so on, is no reason why you should wag yours or I mine in the same way. Every man must do his own believing.

Certainly, a miracle that appears in a biological process is no more of an impossibility than one that appears in the physical, natural, or chemical processes. A mind credulous enough to accept the multiplying of the loaves and fishes, or the raising of the dead, or the resurrection and reappearance of Jesus, will have no need to strain to receive as a truth the advent of the divine Saviour after the fashion recorded in the gospel.

Almost always the great revelations are made to souls so sensitive that it is necessary for the announcer to say first, "Fear not," as the angel did. The fear of the Lord is even yet the beginning of wisdom.

How soon the shepherd slips into the sage! All too early we leave life's pastorals and its visiting glories to consult our astrologies, the star government, and succumb to the fallacy that we are under our stars, some lucky and some unlucky, and a fatalistic pessimism begins. Again, the simple shepherd heart is too early dominated by the scheming and sagacious mind. Once we loved the pastures, the sheep we called by name, the lute-notes and the open sky rejoiced us; now we cast our eye over the flock and say, "So much meat for the market, so much wool for the mill." I know the world will come upon you with its problems to be worked out in figures, and with its wintry and rigorous weathers, but let not the shepherd go from you. Hold to the romance. Carry the lambs a little longer on your shoulders, keep the shepherd song singing in your heart; keep on seeing star-lit plains. Great honors may come to you as sages, but all the great visions and glories come to the shepherd in you.

These glory-surrounded shepherds were about their business. This is worth noting, and I wish the force of this thing might find all the world. I venture to say that if the event had been announced a fortnight before it occurred, a holiday would have been proclaimed, and the priests would have besought

God to make a religious performance of it, urging heaven to send down its glory on the Sabbath day, and through the skylight of the Temple, and by all means to have the Son of the Highest born in the parish house. Judging from what ecclesiastical minds have done since, this conjecture is not extravagant or irreverent. Artists have done their best to religiously transform the lowly conditions of Christ's birth into an æsthetic respectability by beautifying the stable, affixing halos, and hiding the horses, cows, and camels, with the attitudes and robes of noble-looking persons—who were not there. Add to this the revolting spectacle of the fanatical religionists in the Church of the Nativity to-day, where three churches, each with its supply of religious junk, are vying with each other for pre-eminence, and we have an example of what vandalism can do to a holy place that should be marked with a few old foundation stones of the khan.

Keep this in your minds; the star stood over a stable, wherein the Son of God was born; and it was upon men at their labor that the glory fell. This glory was for life, not ceremonies. So was Christ. This Christmas story is so familiar that the startling wonder of it is long since filmed and befogged. Bring a fresh eye to it. Think of it! The angel and

the heavenly host sang and the glory fell upon the shepherds in the field, nameless men, the world's unimportant people.

The Rev. Henry Burton speaks somewhere of "Heaven's glories flashing out against the dull carbon points of earth." He was speaking of places made holy by the visitation of the heavenlies, but he might have included mortal and earthly men. And I beseech you to lift up your faces to God and your hearts to his heaven for his light and song. Confine not this glory to an event in history. Let it find you, your home, your street, your task. Be the lantern to bear about God's light for yours and others' seeing. Yes, it was on shepherds and sheep and trees and rocks and meadows that the Christmas glory fell; it does so to-day. Jesus said, "I am the light of the *world*." Then everywhere look for it. In the world's work he himself will appear. The eternal Christ will be born where the people are paying their taxes, and the great apostle will be seen hastening down the roads that Cæsar built.

But there is one more thing to note about the glory that shone about the shepherds. It was an announcement of the Saviour who had come; and we must not mistake the envelope for the real note. The light was illuminating,

the music sweet and engaging, but both were an invitation to seek and find Jesus, a Person.

Many seem to think that the accompaniment is sufficient. Such a high-toned song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will to men"—such a beautiful theme, and how graciously and mellowly it falls upon men and the earth! "Peace and good will; good will and peace"—hear how they resound. And certainly, they say, this heavenly antiphony, when sustained, will find men and evil will vanish and good prevail. But certainly it will not, for no song can be sustained. If it could be, it would be accustomed, as a dawn is, or a birth of a baby, that no one seems to wonder at, and shepherds would have tended and traded sheep under it, and the sound of marching would be heard on Bethlehem's plains, notwithstanding the refrain, "Peace on earth." A thousand men with Cæsar's ambitions, but without his fame, would stop, tilt their ears to hear, and respond, "Sweet song," and then reposing their heads, exclaim: "Now, what about the business of this earth? Junius, call the legions!" What about the business of the earth? It will not be one whit better, happier, or more beautiful and peaceful until the earth moves over to its center, its heart, where Christ is waiting

to be born and cradled. We can't have Christian influence without a Christ.

O Christ of Bethlehem, born in a manger, wast thou not a sign that the worst and vilest and lowliest earthly creature might have thy glory in his soul?

O Christ of Bethlehem, born as a babe, wast thou not a sign that thou wouldst be but cradled in the heart of man, there to live and grow?

O Christ of Bethlehem, thou the Eternal Word of Life made flesh, wast thou not a sign that it is expedient for thee to come in the flesh and vanish again into spirit, that there may be a Christ for every man everywhere?

I do not know, my friends, how far you have got. Whether you are tarrying under a holy and high-sky influence where you are mistaking the accompaniment for the vital, living word, or whether you have gone even unto Bethlehem, or, again, whether you are waiting for the star to appear in your high mind. Most of you, I am sure, would rather pose as a wise man than a shepherd; with a reputation for a keen telescopic eye, sagacity, caution, circumspection; but in reality the larger part of every one of you is a shepherd. All that I need to do is to call up to you in your observatories and studies: "Come with



me to Bethlehem's plains. The meadows are star-lit, the hills are hazy, there's a bluish white reflection on all the flocks; the air is fragrant; some old sweet song of divine love will be sung, and the silent spaces will whisper immortality into your souls, and a glory will shine round about."

Will you not leave your books and your studies, and will you not thrill as Joseph did when he trod the land of his forefather, David; will you not feel that joy whose ancestor, Eternal Love, has left to you as an inheritance when you should come to claim it? You will. You are a shepherd; you love life and love and song and glory, and there's a call finding your heart just now, a dim call, calling you to Christ.

This is the day of your regeneration. Come, let Christ be born in you to-day. Come, let this be your prayer and plea:

"Thou did'st leave thy throne and thy kingly  
crown,

When thou camest to earth for me;  
But in Bethlehem's home, there was found  
no room

For thy holy nativity.  
O, come to my heart, Lord Jesus!  
There is room in my heart for thee."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Emily E. S. Elliott.

## THAT HARDEST TASK

“Blessed are they that have not seen, but yet have believed.”—*John 20. 29.*

EMERSON asks the question, What is the hardest task in the world? Emerson answers it—to think. Is there not the error of degree in it? Should it not be in the comparative rather than the superlative? The majority find it harder to think than to do many other things, but the hardest task of all is—to believe.

Intellection has, at least, a ready-made world. Every young generation is like a new class of pupils entering the public school, to whom the books of those gone on are handed down; it has something to go on; or like new residents in an old town established and laid out by their ancestors. Intellection enjoys the fruits of earlier labors. Learning is a process of interpreting the unknown by what is already known. There is something solid, safe, and transmitting about the rational life. It is radically social, and all who avail themselves come in for a share of unearned increment.

Belief is wholly individual. Our predecessors in the faith wrap their belief round about them

and move on. Rumors of them and the sight of them arouse our admiration but do not constrain us to follow all the way. Their whisper of the Lord is not ours. The road of faith is not common but personal.

To be a thinker is to be, for the most part, a follower; to be a believer, a frontiersman. A man's experience is not a legacy left to him by another; it is a discovery made where a voice has called his soul by name. As far as a man and his faith are concerned, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Even the power of Christian example, the heirloom of family religiosity or ecclesiastical atmosphere may predispose man toward religion, and are valuable for this, but have little to do with that reality that is ever born in a vision. And many a predilection, when unsupported by the church, has retreated and fled at the sight of the cross in a solitude.

When I said to be a thinker is to be a follower I was speaking of the common mind. There is the mind of the higher order that searches for truth more or less vague, with dependent clues that encourage and satisfy the assumption-picture in the mind. There is, to be sure, faith and daring in either declaring or accepting any major premise. All truth is absolute, and in the beginning a mystery, the

Spirit of Truth, whose laws wait to be discovered and applied. This was the kind of thinking Emerson had reference to, but even this has not the abandoning courage of sincere believing.

Truth derived by intellection is largely for this world and can be verified by facts, things, relations, and previous experience; that derived by faith is peculiar to the soul, and is more often denied by the vicissitudes than confirmed. Most minds are yet at loggerheads with divine justice, perfect love and mercy because of familiar occurrences. Our environment seems dead against the everlasting "yea" of the soul. Who but believers can say,

"Yet in the maddening maze of things,  
And tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;  
I know that God is good!"<sup>1</sup>

To think, I repeat, for most people is to review, recombine conclusions already reached. Faith has only this divine inheritance which Fichte beautifully speaks of:

"The Eternal One

Lives in my life, the light of all my seeing."

To send the mind step by step over the customary thoroughfares of thought packed hard with previous travel is to enjoy certainty; to

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<sup>1</sup> J. G. Whittier, "Eternal Goodness."

trail out the scantier, vaguer footprints through the deeper country of the more abstract truth is not so assuring; to reach that strand where all thoughts about the truth must arrive, and have the footprints appear and disappear, invaded by a tide from out of the deep mystery of all life and truth, is to reach the rendezvous of the honest doubter, the open-minded skeptic; but Faith has yet to walk the sea.

Honest skeptics are those in whose minds reason and faith are temporarily co-operating, making concessions to each other for the sake of peace. To change the figure, it is one of those compositions, which, if it is kept too long, spoils. One or the other must dominate in dealing with all spiritual values. "When I say that Descartes consecrated doubt," says Huxley, "you must remember that it was that sort of doubt which Goethe has called the active skepticism whose whole aim is to conquer itself, and not that other sort which is born of flippancy and ignorance, and whose aim is only to perpetuate itself, as an excuse for idleness and indifference." Well said, and the distinction is clear. God has an enduring mercy and lasting patience with an honest doubter, but they do not last forever, for honest doubt cannot last forever.

God has shown us through Christ that no doubting mind can ever bring satisfaction to the soul. How can it with most of life still undiscovered? Thomas' case was a warning to the world. I have heard many very liberal minded gentlemen in pulpit and on platform condone the Thomas temper, the honest doubter. The same gentlemen would affirm that all folks and all classes of folks are worthy because it takes all kinds to make a world. Now, the fact is it does not take all kinds to make the sort of a world we want, and some kinds we can well do without. Christ dealt with Thomas kindly, but he did not laud him; he rather everlastingly rebuked him, saying, "Thomas, because thou hast seen thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." Thomas could find no unction in that to lay to his soul.

Thorwaldsen has carved the figure of this apostle at Saint Thomas' Church, Copenhagen, with a measuring rule and a pair of compasses in his hands, which is a true conception of the meanest apostolic equipment in a spiritual kingdom. If his were to be the spirit idealized and practiced in Christian discipleship, the death knell of Hope long since would have struck, and Faith's Olivet would be reduced to mere history and geography.



My people, are you ready to do the hardest thing in the world—believe? Devoutly and sincerely believe? Are you ready to launch out into the deep and plunge your souls into the Infinite? Those truths in which your destiny is wrapped cannot be known; they must be felt. The Bard bears it out:

“If e’er when faith had fallen asleep,  
I heard a voice, ‘Believe no more,’  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the godless deep,

“A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason’s colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answered, ‘I have felt.’”<sup>2</sup>

I would that I could make you mystics to-day; and give you wings to lift you out of these too, too mental and material weights. It is far better for you to behold Christ walking on the sea than meet him in the Temple asking and answering questions. It is better for you to watch with him one hour in Gethsemane than to sit in councils for a fortnight or more.

O lovely, open-air kingdom with all thy whispering sky and beatific visions; O wondrous By-the-side-of-the-sea Christ, and through-the-fields Christ, our souls cry out for room and

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<sup>2</sup> Tennyson, “In Memoriam.”

air, for thy love and thy liberty, and yet we live behind these thick doors of the flesh. O Spirit Christ, of thee, even more truly it can be said, with Tennyson,

“Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
I hear thee where the waters run;  
Thou standest in the rising sun  
And in the setting thou art fair.”

Can you smell the Kingdom, hear it, see it, touch it, feel it? I would to God you could. When was the last time you really prayed a prayer without formality or thought of duty's goad or habit? When will you quit talking about the psychology of prayer *and pray*?

When you contemplate Christ do your eyes at times grow wet? They ought. When you think of your heavenly Father's love and sweet compassion, does your heart leap up? It ought. Is there no holy passion?

The lark rises and sings its high-sky song and seeks its mate in the nest. Lovers meet and their hearts grow warm. You bend over cradles and cribs and smile and sigh for joy at the sight of the peeping angels there. Do you wait to understand these things? You do not. They will not wait upon your processing. You sing “Love divine, all loves excelling.” Do you believe it—that divine love excels all

others? "Well," you say, "let me think; what do the authorities say; what is the verdict of the church? Where are the books on this matter?" Rules and compasses again. Always rules and compasses. If you cannot feel the comradeship of the great truths, if you cannot embrace God, you have nothing. When God is sought with syllogisms solely he is never found.

What is the matter with us? I think I know. We have been suckled, nursed, and reared on creeds; they have circumscribed our minds like these circular, hooplike perambulators in which babes learn to walk, built for indoors and porches. We have had a mental clutch and grasp and lean on these, and thought we had something. Not so. There is little spiritual value in any creed as such. Its use is that of the rope which binds the sheaves, the container of the content, the log of the voyaging ship, a scanty table of contents, a literary description, or a fence inclosing a fruitful paradise. But the binder is not the bundle and the fence is not the paradise. We "make believe" that we can eat the rope and be fed, and are in the inclosure by leaning on the fence. There are thousands and thousands of such fence-leaners. If they would only peep through the palings and get a squint at the

Kingdom's sun-flooded, outstretched beauty, or get a whiff of the fruitful vineyard, that would be something, a lure at least. Catechisms are not for the beginners, but the graduates. Pictures and personalities for beginners, anthropomorphism for the primary class (but please don't use that word), stories and songs of life and love for little boys and little girls. What is Christianity but vision, experience, and the actual possession of the living Christ? Very substance, very substance.

Again, all this has been got with difficulty because we have been brought up on the church rather than the Kingdom. In many minds there is no distinction. Speak of spiritual energy and they think of church activities. Crusty, dusty, dingy, and stale in an ecclesiasticism, with nothing above it, through it, or beyond it. I wonder if these do not think of heaven as an everlasting Temple. Too bad. Heaven is not religion but life. There, we shall need no more religion. There are enticing and intimating trails all through the Gospels that keep leading my mind heavenward to divine hills and seas, lovely skies, orchard-odors and something like human face-glows, and a fatherly God.

Now, the church may be a gate through which men go to find Jesus Christ. Again, it

may not be. There are other ways. It always will be a place of refreshment, a well of spirit, a hill of re-vision, and a plain of peace, as well as a service station to those who know Christ.

These are the concretes that obstruct our vision and obstacle our path. Break through! Break through this day with a new freshness and a new force, and embrace your God in Christ!

The hardest task in a world dominated by rationalism is to believe. Scarcely any truth, it seems, arrives factually save on the old mental post roads, when it comes plomping, plomping and bumps into our senses; then it is unquestionably received. "That," we say, "has ever been so, and this is too, therefore the conclusion." Ergo, ergo, ergo, the air is echoing with the ergo, but where is the man who stops in the noise and confusion, and with unprisoned higher senses, sees and hears and feels, and instinctively says "Amèn"? "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life."

To believe is the hardest task in a world like this, a modern feast of tabernacles, with its shambles and ware-shoutings, its commerce and cash, its scrolls and books, sports and

tawdry pleasures. Here and there among the bewildering, bizarre structures is a bit of Gothic pediment or frieze. There are booths of science, art, philosophy, and religion, and in the last one, in the department of forms and ceremonies, God and Life are supposedly hid. On some cold architrave is chiseled "Deum Laudamus"; there is a gate to which one may tip his hat. And the feast goes on—furiously on. Listen! "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Come, come, believe, break through all of it, and like a child running across the fields to meet its father, so let thy soul speed out and on to embrace thy God. Don't reason it out, don't calculate, don't tarry, but *go!*



## WINE!

“But the servants which drew the water knew.”—*John 2. 9.*

God and Life are too wonderful for us to spend our brief term of years investigating them. Let us be done with this title-searching business. We are here to walk in the ways God has laid down for us, which, according to his promise, will bring us our fullest enjoyments and completest satisfactions.

As far as I am concerned school is out. Henceforth and forever I walk in God's garden. Whenever you find me in a laboratory analyzing sunshine and rain instead of going out to get a shower of each, let me know it; or indoors focusing a microscopic eye on a field lily, setting down the results of the observation, saying, “There you are, lily—*liliaecae*, *lilium superbum*, sodium, silicon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, carbon—that is what you are! I've wrung the mystery out of you like water out of a rag,” I will thank you if you will call me to my senses by shouting through the window: “Fool! All the lilies are laughing at you.” “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.” It is a silly thing always to

be trying to understand God and life and meanwhile missing both. The keyword of God's kingdom is not "solve" but "submit."

Miracles are not to be defeated by encasing their mysteries in vocabularies, or in assuming that laws are absolute; and if we can but prove that that which we call supernatural operates in a higher order of laws, then miracles are doomed. Law is God's transportation system and must not be confused with that which is transmitted. Because we discover a few more sections of the system, hitherto unknown to us—for example, the way that sound is transmitted by the impact of ether waves—that does not, by any means, remove the mystery in the ether, the sound, or in the discovering and receiving mind of man.

Some of God's wonders are common; such we call natural. Some are uncommon or extraordinary, these, supernatural, no more wonderful, but unfamiliar; and because the latter zone has been invaded by our progressive knowledge and scientific inquisitiveness, is no reason to think that the mind will ever find and know the secret of the Divine Presence and operation there. We haven't done a complete piece of analysis in our own empirical sphere as yet. We have described appearances, but have had no commerce with the secret.

Who knows how the brain turns off thought, or how bread and meat actually get into physical vitality, or knowledge slips into understanding? Who knows that deep mystery of human love?

In the evolution of life we find species which, because of their hybrid characters, we don't know just where to have them. Are they animals or plants? Are they beasts or fishes? They baffle us in their transition state. And manifestly there is quite a zone where our mortality and immortality blend and we can with the poet say:

“Who can draw that mystic line,  
Which human, which divine?”

But it is precisely in that twilight that the mind gets lost. He is deceived who believes that that whole kingdom invisible which the eternal hope of man holds in his eye, which his faith reaches out and up for, will be soon managed by the mind of man. The water was changed to wine.

Just how the transforming power coursed through those higher laws and then in turn through the lower ones, who knows? You, my friends, can go off in a corner as an investigating committee, and ferret it out if you please; and then come back, as all other explainers

have come, with an absurd and improbable solution far more difficult to believe than the miracle itself. To your conference then. I'll stay by the vat, and while you are gone I'll drink the wine and pronounce it good! I have the better of the argument.

Now, which of the three sets of people at the wedding were the best judges of the wine? Certainly not those without refreshment, among whom it is whispered that the wine has given out, but Jesus is having the water pots filled to the brim with water and will turn it into wine, to be served in short order, and who reply: "It cannot be, for such a thing has never been known. We who know there is a time element in the process of wine making are not to be deceived." Not those, I say; and yet in respect to that greatest of all miracles, new life in Jesus Christ, how open the ears of the world are to the judgments of those who have never been refreshed, never tasted the stimulating wine of divine grace! Volumes of opinions from the negative authority are drunk in rather than the wine itself.

Who were the best judges of the wine? Those who were present and assisted, who saw and tasted. "But the servants which had drawn the water knew." Theirs was the testimony of experience. Then, to confirm this,

turn to the ruler of the feast. That fellow, I am sure, was a good judge of wine. He remarked that most people set on the good wine first and then the worse, but here what came last was the best. This is the evidence from appropriation. Two great words are these, "appropriation" and "experience." The fruits of these repeated gospel invitations, "Come and see" and "Follow me."

Why so much filibustering? If we would but obey that spiritual intuition, enforced with an unprejudiced will, go out and release our higher senses—just let them go—we would see and feel and know the truth of that about which we are always speculating. Less argument, more appropriation. Once we are filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ we won't have time or disposition to do anything else but publish, in attitude and speech, the positive beauty, truth, and wonder of our eternally fresh possession.

"I have a life in Christ to live,  
But ere I live it must I wait  
Till learning can clear answer give  
Of this and that book's date?  
I have a life in Christ to live,  
I have a death in Christ to die:  
And must I wait till science give  
All doubts a full reply?

“Nay, rather, while the sea of doubt  
Is raging wildly round about,  
Questioning of life and death and sin,  
Let me but creep within  
Thy fold, O Christ, and at thy feet  
Take but the lowest seat,  
And hear thine awful voice repeat  
In gentlest accents, heavenly sweet,  
‘Come unto me and rest;  
Believe me, and be blest.’”<sup>1</sup>

The first miracle in Cana of Galilee is the symbol of the primary wonder of the Kingdom of the Spirit, the renewal of life through Christ. The transformation of the common and the commonplaces into something far richer and more sublime. Everybody’s miracle! Water can be changed to wine.

All men were born for God’s stimulants, and they are dumb, asleep, stale, flat and unprofitable until they get them. Christ’s words to Nicodemus state plainly and literally the need of regeneration. “Ye must be born again.” It may be, however, that they have been given a too narrow interpretation, when we take them to mean that we must be recreated to rid ourselves of the crop of Adam’s evils we have fallen heir to in one way or another. I have no doubt that redemptive

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<sup>1</sup> John Campbell Shairp. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.



power is involved, as a part of the whole process. Jesus nowhere, however, mentions original sin, and our heirloom of ancestral sin may not be the primary need of rebirth. It is quite possible that during the dialogue Jesus did not have in mind the type of the prodigal or the prodigal's brother in the parable; rather the like of that fine intelligent, law abiding Jewish gentleman who was conferring with him; to whom rebirth was necessary, for without it they would be merely human and mortal. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Ye must be born again."

God breathed his breath into our nostrils and we lived. His spirit image was formed in us, which may be marred by actual sinning or sloughed off by neglect. God must breathe in us again, literally inspire us, and we live again. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." First the natural, then the spiritual. Remission of sins is worthy of our everlasting gratitude to God. They are lost in the inpouring of the new life. Sins are due in many cases to a life at ebb tide; the "dragons of the prime, that tear each other in the slime" appear. The cure for sin is life, more life, from the great Life-Giver.

"It's life of which your veins are scant,  
Oh, life not death for which you pant,  
More life and fuller that I want."

Ah, my friends, to see what so many men are and then to visualize what they can become is enough to drive every prophet out of his cloister into the great common place, crying, "Come ye to the miracle-feast and be ye changed!"

The very best has been done for us to give a wineless and stimulantless distinction. We are called "thinking animals." But for the most part the products of our mental industries have not done credit to our full genius. The scheme of it all looks comparatively shoddy, shabby, and materialistic. The shapes, forms, and substances of bread, gold, things, terrestrial powers, sensuous or mere mental pleasures, look a deal like a colorless mill town—square, flat, monotonous and dim, with a single philosophic skyscraper of concrete rising up. Other animals reach corresponding ends without so much thinking.

We are called "erect animals." We go vertically. Our heads are in the air; they appear so at least. In reality they may not be. There are a score of ways of moving out of the top apartment. And, again, we may be erect, conform to the perpendicular of moral geometry,

live a life of rectitude, and yet come off a piece of clean, automatic, lifeless machinery. This is different from walking with one's head in the heavenlies.

We are called "laughing animals." But what better are we with this laughter than a dog is with its smelling sense until we regenerate our sense of humor? None of this physiological laughter, this product of our slapsticked wits, is any better than the scent that trails the rabbit with hide and hair unseen. When God laughs down into our souls and sets the inner heart of joy operating, then we shall laugh for the joy of living and of loving. That is distinguished laughter indeed that needs not to be joked out.

"Oh, to hear

God's voice plain as I heard it first before  
They broke in with that laughter."

We have several forms of wineless wine-skins. The image of the rich young ruler comes to our minds—law abiding, erect, and with a record of good works, and somewhat smug in an undisciplined conceit, which is not to be wondered at. A new wine-skin inflated, but not with wine. The Pharisees for the most part were old wine-skins ossified. Certainly, there was nothing flexible or collapsible

about the Pharisees. Self-rated as rare, and not like other men, according to their prayers, they sought the chief seats.

These pictures vanish for something better. Here come the fisher lads. Yo-ho! fisher lads! tell us all about it. How did it happen? The last time we saw you you were casting nets, washing boats—dim boys in tarpaulins. Where did you learn to speak so and to do so? Where did you catch that laughter and that song? Who tuned you up and brought such a melody out of humdrumness? What spirit have you drunk? Who widened your world and set your fancies sailing like ships upon the sea? Who dredged your souls for a deeper love? Now tell us, lads; we're curious. You are so different. How do you see the sky now and the hills now? How do you hear the birds? "It is easily said," the fisher lads reply. "Water can be changed to wine."

New wine in fresh wine-skins! Wonderful! Will you submit to the miracle or will you not? God knows you need it. Why live and die in a mere mortality?

"Don't disturb us with a miracle," you say; "the old order is good enough for us. We like our lodgings and don't want to move. Don't start anything, Mr. Preacher. Rationalize with us. Review those big subjects of yours,

let us have them in calm talk and cold print, but don't stimulate us. Don't stir us up. Let our emotions alone. Don't call out tears, for tears wash our inner windows, and we don't want them washed. As it is now, our vision goes just *to* them and mirrors back ourselves as we are. And says the devil, standing by, 'Fine view!' We reply, 'Old demon, you are a good judge of pictures.' If our vision went *through*, we might have to get up and go, and follow the gleam.

"Don't open our windows lest some breath from the far-off vineyards may blow in, or a breeze from the everlasting hills, and refresh us, and stir up our adventure. Don't open the doors. We may see the beginning of the Macedonian trail. Don't disturb us, don't rouse us, or we may have to get up and go."

Come, O Christ, change us! Here we fill these natural vessels to the brim. We would fulfill our mortal selves. Thou wilt do the rest. How silently the wondrous gift is given! We feel the transmutation, the very substance of hope, faith, courage, and victory rising in us. And through the world's shadows and the sun spots we are able to go, and the weird, shocking, sorrowful music of the menaces we can face and do our work. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine ene-

mies," and at last we dare to lie down on the horizon line in peace and safety and go to sleep. Only to thrill again, and open our eyes to see an angel near with a drained wine cup saying, "Follow me; come and see."

"Angel," we say: "we've heard those words before, are they for this high world too? They are? Then we shall obey. Lead on."

The door opens. "Behold—!" The door shuts. Let all that are without, still in this world, remember that, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

This mortal must put on immortality. Water can be changed to wine.



## A GOBLET OF SONG

(AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT A MUSICAL  
SERVICE)

A STRANGE noise. It kept sounding above my head as I sat in my study. Dub, dub, dub, with the measured regularity of a metronome. First I thought it was a mother jogging a colicky or a teething child on her knee, for it sounded something like the heel-fallings of some wearied foot; and I concluded that if that be the case, inasmuch as this dubbing goes on by the hour, that the child could not possibly escape a broken back, or at least a curvature of the spine. No cartilageous backbone could ever stand a jolting like that without serious consequences. But one day, not long ago, I heard a break in the time—it came dub, dub, dub-dub-dub; then I heard a rolling rattle, and the secret was out. It was a drummer at his drum.

But it was still a good deal of a quandary to me. I could not understand why it is necessary for anyone to go on dubbing by the hour, for has anyone ever pounded anything more than a B-flat out of a drum? I wanted it to stop, for some time ago I decided that no pic-

colo or drum solo can last over an hour and be a success. But, I concluded I would not register a complaint against the man above me, but, rather, enter it against myself and my present mood. So I soliloquized: My hat is off to the fellow upstairs for his enthusiasm and endurance with that drum. Would you, Mr. Pastor, in the pursuit of perfection in your profession hammer as long at anything? Then it suddenly came to me that he was not hearing what I was hearing. Obviously, he is a member of an orchestra or a band; and all the while he is pounding out that monotone he keeps hearing the clarinets, the finer, softer music of the violins and the vivid colorings of the horns. He was refreshed with a cup of stimulant I knew nothing about.

Now, there you are. On every monotone comes dashing, splashing down a cupful of colorful music to tone it up. The whole world is a symphony if you can only hear it with your eyes. There are flats and plains and tiresome levels and many weary wastes; there are drab skies and rains, but there are mountains too, and hills, and wonderful woodlands, shining lakes and luring seas. There are morning and evening skies, and add to this the changing seasons, and what can we do but shout a plaudit to our divine Artist

for this masterpiece, and this symphony, this thrilling harmony; this refreshing mixture that is a tonic to every awakened soul? There may be moanings on the lowlands, but there's a song of hope upon the heights.

A pessimist is a man out of tune. He sees only the havoc wrought by the grinding law of things as they are. He has an eye only for the hurts and pains, the sorrows and misfortunes of mankind, and pours this into his philosophy, assuring the people that they live in a songless world and under an indifferent sky. But that isn't fair. We must "see life steadily and see it whole." A world circumscribed and interfused with eternal life, a divine promise sweeping through all this perishable flesh, the smile of the soul, and hear the laughter of the heart, and feel that deep and moving mystery in all human love. Is there not a cheerful and triumphant theme that emerges from the dull, sad wail of this humanity? Hard by, on every monotonous tableland our God has set a goblet of song.

But where is the table and where is the cup? In the inner man, always in the inner man. Some are born in dark inner houses, and come forth blind to the world. True spirits are born in an inner light that throws a vision through all the doors and windows of the

senses and glorifies the whole. It reveals the inner table with daily bread upon it, and the cup of song near by; they eat and drink and say, "We are content."

One thing the apostles of despair cannot understand—the appearance of song in such unlikely places. The psalmist's soul moves through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, singing "My cup runneth over." One dark midnight, in Philippi, in a nasty, vermin-ridden jail, the apostles' feet were fastened in the stocks, but Paul and Silas sang a song, and the door opened. In the long, wearisome war marches, in the row upon row of trenches, stretched on the hither edge of death, the tommies and the doughboys sang their songs. Here is the explanation of it. With every hard jolt the inner cup spills over and fills up all the depressions, and in the surface sheen is reflected a high heaven and a high hope.

There is a very costly perfume on the market called "Christmas Night." It has a sweet and subtile fragrance. But comparatively few can buy it. There is a very rich, pure joy-essence, named for Christmas Night, and all may have a cupful for the seeking without money and without price. You remember how the heavens opened and it came pouring down through the angels' songs, filling weary and

hopeless human hearts. Then it seemed to stop, but it didn't. It was found that, moving through all the roads and over the fields of Judæa, and by the seashores in Galilee, was He, of whom the angels sang. God's divine Troubadour, with an inexhaustible joy in his soul carried the song for all the people. Sad faces came to their doors as Jesus passed by and cried, "Where are those I loved and lost?" And he sang to them a song of eternal life with the refrain, "In my Father's house are many mansions." And they went back into their houses, lighted up the fires, lifted the eastern shade, and smiled, saying, "We live again."

Weary ones, burdened with labor and with fear, came, and he sang them a stream song of rest and peace in the Father's care, and they lifted up their heads, went back with their cupful, and on the morrow they poured some on their toil and, lo! it shone and was glorified.

Angry faces of men with hatred and envy in their hearts came out quickly as Jesus passed and shouted: "The world is uneven. Justice is dethroned; a tyrant rules; the iniquitous prosper, the good suffer." And he sang them a song, a beautiful song with the birds of the air in it, and the flowers of the field in it, and ending it with "A man's life does not consist

in the abundance of things he possesses." He went down the road; they turned to each other and said, "True, true, our wealth is not in the banks, nor our happiness in riches."

Then he disappeared among the far blue hills, this divine singer, so they said. But others said, "No, we have seen him and heard him everywhere. He is the Spirit-Christ, who no more sings on the outside of our sense-doors and windows, but moves through them all unseen and stands in the heart, puts bread upon the table, and fills the cup again and again.

Yes, trailing up and down all the broad common avenues of men, and the secret paths of their souls, is a heavenly music. Men stop to listen and turn their hearts to God.



## THE ECHO OF THAT SHOUT

(Delivered at a Union Service held in All Angels Protestant Episcopal Church, New York City, on Armistice Day, 1924.)

JUST six years ago to-day at eleven o'clock in the morning there went up to heaven and to the uttermost parts of the earth a mighty shout. And what a strange composition it was. The disconsolate groans of the defeated, the joyous cries of the victors, the wails of ten thousand sonless fathers and mothers, and of widowed wives, like Rachels weeping for their own, that could not be comforted. The tension of hearts and homes through these terrible and embattled years, broke and dripped with tears and rushed out in song. All this was accompanied with the chiming of the bells and the booming of the cannon. The war was over. Great God, what a relief! You remember it well; so do I; you stopped what you were doing; so did I. Yet with all the clamorous celebration in the outer world, there was a great and solemn hush within. It was a holy hour. Eyes were wet, heads bowed, prayers said.

Soon, soon, this loud shout died away. The

law that runs through time could not sustain it, but in the soul of it something everlasting was lodged, like a resurrection voice born out of sacrificial blood—the abiding echo of the shout, an emotion that rolls through the world and shall ever roll, bringing to our remembrance what was whispered through the sod of No Man's Land.

“If ye break faith with us who die,  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.”<sup>1</sup>

This ceaseless echo, never to be silenced again, reminds us that our heroes offered themselves on the altars of Death, in order that justice might never be dethroned, freedom trampled in the dust, and righteousness scoffed at or scorned.

Life is more than meat and the body than raiment. Let these things which they died to save once pass, although our fields bring forth, our banks and markets glut with wealth, we shall be profited nothing. Let the love for these things, regenerated through their spilt blood, wane and wither away, we are not worthy of the name of men, good only to exist in a world whose moral fiber has rotted and whose soul is dead.

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<sup>1</sup> John McCrae.

These things we must love best of all, and put down tyranny, oppression and evil whenever and wherever it lifts its ugly face and its wicked arm—even with the sword. We do well to pray to-day that the sword may pass away, but not until we have prayed that Truth and Justice and Honor may ever stay at all hazards and costs. Our love and loyalty to the right, and our determination that it shall prevail must exceed our hatred of arms as terrible as these instruments are. We do well to pray that wars shall pass away, but shame on us when we so weaken as to wear a garb of peace woven of compromises to preserve a continued convenience and a peace that is not peace.

“If ye break faith with us who die,  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.”

This echo of that shout is the emotion, that which moves out of its depths and moves into human depths mixing strangely with all time and space, growing sweet, musical, and mellow. All the laws of sound's measure and beat are lost in sentiment. And if the emotional value of this conflict vanishes we have lost all. The only way we have of sustaining abstract realities is to clothe them in sentiment, cradle

them in the feelings, foster and fix them in conviction. Who is able to reduce a great reality to a formula or verbal expression? They have no limit, no definition, and when they go home they speed to the heart.

Thinking truth and thinking justice may possess one of opinions, but loving truth and loving justice is productive of great deeds. It is the emotional value that is stirring, stalwart, determinative, and eternal.

When sentiment is lacking love of country goes to seed in lifeless words and enforced deeds; politics is divorced from patriotism and turns out to be a selfish contest; patriotism, in turn, is divorced from life, and must needs have wars, uniforms, flags, banners, and oratory to keep it vital and astir. What mockery! Only real sentiment, moreover, can evaluate the times of peace and espy their valorous achievements.

When this noble sentiment disappears, the nation turns into a backyard of industries, with its labor and taxes and property and things, things, things; taking no thought for its beauty; growing a body, but neglecting the soul.

So, concerning this war, it is the whole of it, all of this blood-bought sacrifice that must be received into the soul of the world, there to do

its mysterious work, or it is of no avail. It must be lost in us to live, otherwise it can bring forth no new vision of liberty and life. Our gain is not in the decision, not in the balanced sheet, not in a new geography, but in a new generation of humanity. A new and nobler spirit was given to us to leaven the world with. In this is our salvation.

The Son of God went forth to war; the Son of God achieved; and by his achievement we have our salvation. Who of us can understand it? None. We must open and let the miracle in. Did Christ ever say that we should be saved by what he said, or rather by what he did? Blood redeems, not words. Sacrifice, always sacrifice!

“If ye break faith with us who die,  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.”

Is it a strange flitting of imagination I have, or is it a truth, that a ghost moves where the poppies grow, where crosses stand above the mounds, row on row, a silent sentinel that watches over all this world and gives back report and tells our deeds to them? God grant that if it be so, he may bow his head and whisper down every evening and say, “Sleep

on and take thy rest, for they've kept the faith to-day."

Thanks to our heroes for what they did. Thanks to those who gave them. Our hearts are bleeding for all those homes where stars of gold are hung. This is your day, bereaved ones, this is your day. Let all the world stop its work and bow its head on the altars you have offered upon, lest we forget, lest we forget. They were only boys too. Oh the dreams of the days that were before them! Perhaps their brave and willing hearts thought not too much of them, for truly:

"One crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name."<sup>2</sup>

This pledge we give to those who lost their boys, to those that sent them forth, and it has our heart's blood in it. We promise you that if ever again the best there is in all life is assailed, defiled, and trampled down, we'll give our boys too.

I've seen the spring grow out of winter and love rise up from the thing it leaned on. I've seen the heart of that called Life, with the seed of heaven in it—and I know this is the truth and you who mourn hearken to it:

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<sup>2</sup> Sir Walter Scott, "Old Mortality."



"I tell you they have not died,  
Their hands clasp yours and mine;  
They are now but glorified,  
They have become divine.  
They live, they know, they see,  
They shout with every breath:  
All is Eternal Life,  
There is no Death!"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gordon Johnstone.

## PUSHED TO POWER

“Him they compelled to bear his cross.”—  
*Matthew 27. 32.*

I AM thinking of an incident this morning which as often as I do it fills me with feelings of both joy and sorrow. The fascination it had for me the first time I read it has only increased through the intervening years. The story, in brief, is this: Simon, a Jew of Cyrene, a city in North Africa, had come to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover. The city was overcrowded with pilgrims and he was compelled to take lodgings in the suburbs.

Every morning he entered the gates of the city and went into the Temple to pray and perform those rites and ceremonies prescribed by law and custom. Friday of Passover week dawned as clear as crystal and the gracious sunlight, the floating odors from the nearby vineyards, the gladsome look about everything blended and rose like incense unto his godly meditations as he made his way through the countryside to the city gate.

As he was about to enter he noticed a crowd coming out, accompanied with no little noise and confusion. Approaching, he spied a

Roman centurion and a cohort of soldiers and two men bearing crosses on their backs. It was clear to his mind then. These men were criminals, who were about to be crucified, according to the law, outside the city walls. But why the mob should stop in the shadow of the wall was not so clear until he got near enough to mingle with the crowd and see what they were beholding, a third victim on the ground crushed beneath his load. Signs of agony, fatigue, and exhaustion, marks of many buffetings were upon him. The official churchmen were enjoying the calamity and were urging the centurion to prod him on and compel him to bear his burden to the end. But the pagan had more mercy. Ignoring their overtures he looked about him. Simon soon felt the eyes of the Roman resting on him, and his heavy hand clapping his shoulder.

"Come," said the centurion. "You have stout shoulders, lift the burden for this poor fellow and carry on!"

"Sir!" remonstrated Simon, "I am going to the Temple to pray."

"In the name of Caesar and the law you are going to yonder hill with this load. Up with it now, come!"

At the announcement of this conscription Simon most unwillingly bent his back for the

burden. His peaceful and worshipful mood was dissipated, his plans balked and his appointment with God could not be kept that day.

As he stooped to hoist the load on his back he got a near view of the victim's face. What a face! What a face! He thought he had seen it before. Hadn't he heard this Man speak wonderful words within the walls? Surely this was Jesus of Nazareth. The Master's look penetrated Simon's soul and stirred up thoughts and feelings there he had never had before. On they went, side by side, Christ and Simon. Strange impressment! The weight of the burden left his shoulders and sank into his soul. He arrived at Calvary with a deep and poignant sorrow. When he learned, however, what Heaven was doing that day; what the spectacle was he was to behold with his own eyes; what was to be transacted on that load of lumber he had borne on his back—that from it there should go forth a power to redeem the whole world, his sorrow turned to everlasting joy.

I can wonder only what Jesus said to Simon on the way. Something, I'm quite sure. Many, many times I've wished to know. I cannot do that divine thing Jesus did, neither can you; but I can do the human thing Simon did; so can you, and therefore, I so much wish to

know what word Jesus has to speak to one who does what Simon did.

The Cyrenian did not enter the Temple that day, probably never again, but he entered a kingdom whose strange doorpost bowed his back and caused his heart to bleed. Back over the waters he went to Africa with the bruise of the cross upon his shoulders, with its image in his soul.

What was the result? The manner in which the gospel speaks of Simon's sons, Rufus and Alexander, to identify their father, indicates that these men were prominent Christians in the early church. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, speaks of Rufus as one of God's elect and commends their mother as one who mothered him when he was in their house. The burden-bearer's family became a kind of first fruit of that Messianic hope for whose fulfillment every devout Jew yearned.

Consider Simon as the type of those who are pushed into power. Here was a man bent on his formal religious part, treading the mosaics, hoping some day to see the appearing of the Messiah, David II, in David's house, in David's robes and crown, but there was a resistance at the gate, his way reversed and in the most unexpected manner, in the most unexpected place, he met the Expected One face to face in

a most unexpected form and fashion. By an apparent accident he not only saw his Redeemer but served him.

This event is topicked "Simon's Impressionment." A fitting title indeed to describe those forces that drove a man against his will, into privileges and powers he had not otherwise known. We have a way of bewailing our reverses and misfortunes, laying the blame at the door of Providence. "If," we say, "this thing had not befallen us——" and proceed to dream of what might have been. But who knows what might have been? Some of the most promising paths widen out and suddenly descend to the murk, to disaster, and despair. I am enough of a fatalist to believe that no real harm can come to that man whose purpose is pure and godly in this world.

God sometimes swings the door of opportunity outward with great force upon the man who is about to enter with the spring of promise in his step, plunging him backward to save him from something far worse. There is a Pentecost in every calamity and he who seeks the soul in it finds it. There is a divinity that shapes our end. We all are creatures of exigencies, and few of us had ever achieved anything worth while had we not been pushed to it.



Let us not underestimate the value of the pressure of events. It is peculiar to human nature to seek the lines of least resistance, even in a religious way, to travel paths of pleasantness and peace, enter a wide gate and partake of a feast, but it is God's way to push the burden on us that will press our genius and power out. Let us once ignore the pressing events in our histories and they would not be worth the reading. Give most men a year to do a thing and they'll ask you for another and still another; push the event on them and the sweat of their brows turns to crowns of gold. It is only when the rough forerunner appears crying, "The time is at hand" that we bestir ourselves. Ten thousand heroes lie asleep in this mankind until the bugle sounds the reveille; when the enemy encircles the camp then mark you how men die on crosses and achieve their immortality! God still chooses men to whom he reveals his promise and then withal he must raise up the harassing Philistines to goad men on to the goal.

I have known men, in the agony of a single night, a dark night, deep in despair, pressed with sorrow and care, to grow so tall that their heads appeared in heaven, and they have looked God in the face, and bending again to mortal things, have gathered others' burdens

on their shoulders bruised with the cross and carried them lightly and with a song, and have lit up paths for the purblind with the broken light of God that has fallen out of their spirits upon the earth. I feel, my brethren, that all's right with this world while God is in his heaven.

Again, God uses events to force men to the source of life and power. No horizon line between heaven and earth, seen and unseen, shall sever that law of cause and effect that runs unbroken through two worlds. Here was a devout religionist who had lost his way and did not know it. Seeking a new Kingdom of Soul and Service, by entering an old gate and upon an established routine. He in his unconscious ignorance would be a part of the effects without being a part of the cause; would taste the sweet of the fruit without the bitterness of the root. Impossible! The resistance at the gate hurled him back to the beginning of the road that led to his hope's fulfillment.

How logical regeneration is! The beginning again for those who have lost their way; the redeeming of the time wasted and the life that has been lived in vain. All life that is life begins at the cross. The cross is the root of the whole matter, and that which springs into being there is bound to be productive.

That there is a Jerusalem type of Christianity we must admit—a walled capacity. Courses are pursued through the gates and into the Temple where the learned doctors with the aid of manuscripts set our minds in religious order. Sacrifices are made by proxy, carried so as not to mar nor stain us, to the priesthood to be offered up to God in our behalf; our pet charities finally get into the delivery system and down the avenues to the people. We come home unsoiled to our homes to abide in the suburbs of the Temple. Fine in form but where is the power? Has this religious order ever produced anything? It is all like a branch cut from the vine.

Real experience begins outside the city gates. It is rooted in sacrifice and self-denial. It begins with a dying and suffers agony; it bleeds and sweats; it drinks the bitter cup. Time and time again I think of what Jesus said when the Greeks came saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." It seems irrelevant, but it isn't. Most significant. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Christian experience first comes from the root, so different from its fruit. The other day, while passing through a great factory in this city where perfumes are made, for the

first time in my life my nostrils made their acquaintance with the root stock and basis of subtle, delicate, and luxurious odors. Bah! My dear ladies, the base of violet smelled nothing like the breath of violets. How pungent, rancid, unpleasant, disagreeable and, in some cases, foul, these odors were that send forth sweet smells! One could not help thinking, even there, of the impressments, burdens, and agonies of plants and the toilings of men.

There is a large class of people in this world who are born to the soil. They are acquainted with hard labor. They know little else but toil. Every morsel of bread they eat has been wrung from the soil and earned by the sweat of their brow. When these people turn to God they never expect anything else but they must work out their own salvation with fear and with trembling, with anguish of mind and soul, with a wrestling with God and angels.

There is another class of people who are born with a legacy. They have endowments, mental, social, physical, and live on an upper level where with their natural skill they reshape and finish the root-matters and raw stuffs that are handed up to them by the others. All of you who sit before me this morning are of this class. It is not so easy for me to convince you that the kingdom of God is a thorough-

going democracy and God is no respecter of persons; that every one of you must begin at Calvary. Art thou mentally gifted? Thou must bow thy forehead in the dust. Dost thou drink from a cup of gold? Thou must drain its bitter dregs as if it were but wood. Art thou attired in silk or satin or broadcloth or ermine? Thou must strip thyself to that common seamless robe that all humanity wears. As for the sacrifice thou art it thyself. Thou must die to live!

Lady or gentleman, millionaire or pauper, doctor, lawyer, merchant; six spikes I give unto thee; two for thy hands, two for thy feet, one for thy mind and one for thy heart. Horrors! Yes, the birth-throes of a new and joyous life. Horrors! Yes, horrors from which all happiness springs. All the world is wrong in believing that happiness is a goal. It is not a goal, but the consequence of the life that begins at the cross.

“Two travelers met in passing and one was lost  
in the murk;

“Tell me (I come from Nazareth seeking carpenter work),

Is this the road to Jerusalem?”

“You’re somewhat out of the way,

A furlong to the right, sir, brings you to Calvary,

Then turn along the hillside—a path leads to  
the street

Where three men loom on crosses with nails  
clinched through the feet.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

I wonder if we have lost our way? Sometimes I fear that we may be even now so busy going up and down the religious avenues and in and out the Temple that we miss that procession that begins outside the city, moves through the Garden, over the hilltop and out into that sunlit and eternal Galilee of God. I have a fear that we may be avoiding events that would push us into that spiritual passion wherein is born that new life that carries the world as its baggage and embraces to its bosom that love that is eternal.

Do you bear the marks of crucifixion upon you? Blessed were the bruises of Simon’s shoulders whereon was laid the cross of Christ. Happy and proud that warrior of God who shouted, “Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus upon my body.” Do you? I would that you, like this apostle for whom this house is named, that you, known as Saint Paul’s people, might show to this world the sign of the cross.

This world is so much in need of people who

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Kemp, *Chanteys and Ballads*. Reprinted by permission of Brentano’s, publishers.



have come down from their crosses. Fear is everywhere; so many afraid to live and afraid to die, who quake at the thought of vicissitudes. And to see cross-scarred feet moving on the ways of the world, through fears like so many shadows, in step with an eternal tune—ah! that is good. Even so, it is the feet that have been nailed on crosses that teach the world how to walk. And cross-scarred hands, how strong and tender they are! They never slip or mar, they lift and hold, and tenderly stroke the poor fevered brow until all the cares of the mind silently move to the scar in the palm and are crucified there. Half the world is sorrowing all of the time. All the world is burdened in one fashion or another all of the time. Ten thousand voices are ever calling, ten thousand hands are ever reaching for him who has the image of the cross in his soul. They hang on his every word, they relax in his smile, they lie down in peace and safety as he tells them of the night and the eternal morning.

Let us all this day meet at Calvary. Some carrying crosses there, some hanging on them, some coming down the hill slope with fresh scars, other pilgrims bowing at its foot, as the memorial of that day and place where they first saw the light and the burdens of their hearts were rolled away.

## FISHERMEN'S LUCK

“And going on from thence, he saw two other brethren, James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.”—*Matt. 4. 21, 22.*

It was a trying time for Zebedee. He and his sons John and James with their fisher friends, brothers too, the sons of Jonas, had been fishing all night and had taken nothing. Fishing was their trade. They were coming ashore now through the morning dusk, and the dusk was in their moods. They rowed in gloomy silence. There was a heavy grinding of the oars in the locks, a rapping of the choppy waves under the boat's bow, a swishing of the water that feathered up and sprayed down again. Then Zebedee broke the silence and said, “Never mind, boys, when you get to be old salts like me, you'll take better to your empty nets.”

They were nearing land when they saw the dim silhouette of a man in the mist standing on the shore. It was Jesus. He spoke to them in their disappointment and told them to launch out into the deep and where to cast

in again. Then came the memorable haul. They had forgotten their weariness in the stimulation of success, just as most men do. Jesus left them to finish their work.

Day had come, and a crystal day at that. The water was a deep, clear ultramarine, and would have run up in a sharp horizontal line against the unclouded sky had it not been for a rim of purple hills across the lake, which seemed that day like a narrow isthmus between earth and heaven. There was a moist breath blowing off the sea, and a light fragrant one blowing out of the sky, a convintage of spice-laden Lebanon and the leagues of the intervening summer fields and vineyards. Altogether it was the aromatic spirits of a heavenly day, and good for the soul.

It was stimulating to Zebedee, for he chuckled as he sat there mending the nets. "A big haul, boys," he said. "In all my experience I've never seen a greater. Played havoc with our nets, but Zebedee will mend them." His mind was full of cozy thought and future plans. How happy he was that his boys were fishers with him, and there is no reason why they should not remain all their lives at Capernaum.

Late in the day Jesus returned to the spot where they were sitting in the boat. Jonas'

boys were with him, for he had met them up the beach and said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." "John, James," said Jesus, "come and follow me," and they looked at Jesus and would not say no. They left their mending, their nets, their boats, and their father, and went down the beach.

"O we've signed on, father dear, with a  
greater Shipman now,  
For to cast a world-wide net from a starry  
vessel's prow,  
Spoke up John while sunset lay like a halo  
on his brow.

"James said nothing, only laughed, the adventure in his face.

They departed as the stars lit illimitable space.

All the neighbors said such sons were a scandal and disgrace."<sup>1</sup>

Zebedee was first dumbfounded, then stood on his trembling legs and with a broken voice called to them through the distance: "John! James! My boys, come back to your father." They waved their hands, but on they went. Once more he called, but they did not hear. He now sat down to think it all over. "I

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Kemp, *Chanteys and Ballads*. Reprinted by permission of Brentano's, publishers.

ought not to feel this way," he mused. "It was Jesus, the Messiah, who called them. Yes, the Son of God called my fisher lads to be fishers of men." It may have been that a swift vision penetrated his mind bearing in upon it a double picture of the future, of James the great shepherd of Israel, bishop of many souls, and John laying his head on the Saviour's breast to hear the eternal heart beat and the inner voice, and lifting it again to write for a wondering and sorrowing world, "Let not your heart be troubled . . . In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. . . . My peace I leave with you." Zebedee got to his feet again and, making a megaphone with his hands, shouted: "It is all right, my boys. Can you hear me calling? I wish you could. Farewell, fisher lads, and a father's blessing go with you!" With this he swiped the tears from his cheeks, and, singing a snatch of an old psalm he had heard in the synagogue:

"They looked unto him and were radiant,  
And their faces shall never be confounded,"

he sped off up the hill to tell their mother all about it.

What did they leave for Christ's sake? Fishing for fish, their nets and the mending of

them. Let all the world hear it—they left off mending their nets when Jesus came by. It is the big business of the world—mending of nets for another haul. Mending fortunes for a greater draught, adding another cord to the mesh and another hook to the line, that nothing escape. They hear, but heed not the calling voices: “Come, John Fisher, come out. Life is waiting to companion you.”

“I can’t. I have no time. To-morrow is another day. I must mend my nets.”

“Come, James Netter, put up your work. Lean over the edge of it at least, see, hear, feel all. There’s a voice calling to you from the hills.”

“That may be so, but a man owes it to himself to mend his nets.”

“Come, John; come, James. The stars are out, the moon is full, and the children are singing in their games. Listen; it will shower your weary spirit with joy.”

“No, no. We must be busy preparing for another haul.”

So much of this world is fishing for fish; food for the body, more and more of it; food for the senses, never enough. Minds are ever mending. Is there a hole in the scheme, the plan? Knit the brows and sew it up. So many minds are tangled nets. Is it not a man’s



duty to attend to his fortune and care for his family? Yes, but there's a time to quit. And Jesus never comes by and calls until it is time to quit. It is not that a man must retire early from his business, but retire again and again while he is in it. The peril is not in things, but in thought about desire and passion for things.

There is a soul-man in every sense-man, and the eternal man in every frame of flesh, who hungers and cries, "I must have meat to eat ye know not of!" Why feed him on fish and keep him mending nets? Some inner men refuse, absolutely and for all time, refuse. A librarian that I know is one of them. He could make a bigger haul at something else, but he loves books, book people, book atmosphere, book bindings. His home is modest; a few delightful and well-chosen etchings adorn the walls; the chairs and floor coverings are in good taste, and there's a wholesome breeze of the world's best thought blowing through the chambers that keeps them palpitating and alive. Why do so many brilliant minds go struggling through the musical world, trailing out song and catching harmonies in the soul? Why take chances in the world of art and the drama? Why keep at plowing or teaching? Just this: there is a voice that whispers in the

soul's ear, "Here is thy happiness; elsewhere misery."

Now—would you believe it?—there are tempters who would even dissuade preachers from their callings. "Come," they say, "quit fishing for men and fish for fish." I met a man in a train not long ago, whom I had not seen since we were boys together playing in the lot. He was a commercial man; he was soaked in commercialism, it oozed out of his every pore. It was up to his "gills" as we say, and have the right to say, in this figure of speech. He lived it, breathed it, dreamed it, worked at and overworked it. He was astonished when I told him I was a minister. "*You* a minister!" he exclaimed. I did not like the emphasis, but felt some relieved when he went on to say that with my capacities I could make a larger haul. He had several things to offer me. I refused them all. I could see from the puzzled and surprised manner in which he looked at me that I was quite beyond his understanding. While he was marveling at me I was marveling at him. I could not understand how any normal man in his rightful mind could smell so strong of fish.

Men of the kingdom of God, how rare you are! Time upon time I pass your faces and your spirits in review. I mean, you who sit

before me Sabbath after Sabbath. What is it that makes you, business men and professional men, different? I think I know. I presume many of you make considerable at what you are doing. Others not so much. No matter about that. When Christ calls you and you are mending nets, you quit. It is time to quit. Are you hauling? You stop. It is time to stop. There is no poking the finger down in the fish basket to see how far the bottom is. There is no saying, "Wait, Master, just one more haul and I'll come," or, "Wait until I weave this last cord and I'll come." No, if it is a gift that's wanted, you have something to give; if it is service, you have time.

Every man's business is a parable of spiritual equipment, and there's a picture and story of a good catch in it somewhere. Jesus caught these men, these fishers in the attitude of casting in, and hauling. It was as if the Light of the World that day on the beach threw the images of these men, after the manner of shadows, large, upon the sky, until they appeared to be what they were to be, sky-men fishers, and as if Jesus said, pointing to that larger heavenly equipment, "Come now, suppose we use these nets from this day on."

When Christ calls, you do not need to retire from your business and go to preaching. The

chances are all of you would not be good and effective preachers for pulpits. You are not to transfer your activity to head charity organizations or Bureaus of Benevolences, but to catch men for Christ with your own business as a net. Not only is a man's business the parable of a spiritual equipment, but it has in it actually the power of a good catch. Every man's line is a good fishing line.

Would you know how to fish? Mark then the Fisher of fishers, Christ, the eternal Catcher of men. He trailed his spirit through the Bethany home and took the whole family. He blessed little children in the market place and said of them, "To such belongs the kingdom of God," and the touched hearts of the parents said, "We want to be of the kingdom too." He took them. He fished at a well and captured the soul of the woman of Samaria. He got Zacchæus as with a line out of the crowd. He attended Levi's party, and as with a net he drew rough-hearted publicans to himself. He comes upon the woman taken in adultery and from the cruel-hearted accusers he draws her unto an eternal salvation.

And then, in the garden, he sought to draw something out of heaven to satisfy his own sorrow's hunger with, but the sky was as dusklike as it was the morning on which he

called his fisher lads. "He toiled all the night and took nothing," but when morning came there appeared a high fishing stand, and they nailed him to it, so that he couldn't fall; and would you believe it, from there, too, he cast in his net among his persecutors. "Father, forgive them," he prayed, "for they know not what they do." Still fishing! O Master Fisher! Wonderful! "How can you do it?" "With God's grace, to teach you how to be good fishermen," he says. They left their nets and followed him, yet not altogether did they leave their nets.

Again. They left their father and followed him; yet not altogether did they leave their father. "If any man . . . hate not his father, and mother, . . . and sister, and brethren, . . . he cannot be my disciple." Rather a harsh sound. But we never know those who are dearest to us until we leave them and follow Christ. These lads went off from Zebedee, the fisher, the father of a family, the resident of Capernaum, the man of boats and nets, to find the real Zebedee, seen and known through love. He was so changed when they came back because their vision had changed.

I remember the first time the truth of subjective love, now so common to the mature

mind, first stole into my soul. It was on a late spring Sabbath morning in a little country church. The windows were open and while my eyes were on the preacher, who was my father, in the secondary scope of vision were the blossomed trees by the horse-sheds; and the birds made a fitting accompaniment for this truth that touches the heart as a song. He used the familiar illustration of the mother and her child, and told how the source and strength of that love was in the mother-heart, and the child was but the call and the beckoning. It explained many things to me. I looked in the mirror when I got home and confirmed the truth of it. I looked into my unworthy life and could not account for the affection lavished on me, if that were not the truth. It cleared up the reason for some beautiful facial expressions I've seen on parents looking upon their child whom the nurses called "a little animal," and schoolmaster "one of our students," and the census taker "a resident," and a social scientist "a unit of the mass." Love spies the angel that no other eye can see.

Zebedee, you are revised! What a father you are to your boys now! Maybe James takes him by the hand, and John puts his arms around him with an unusual tender-



ness. They are seeing Zebedee through Christ.

They left all and followed him. Can you leave all for Jesus? Hard question. Can you, like one on a high promontory, pass before your mind's eye all that seems completely satisfying to you, and quite enough, and ask yourself if you can count it as loss for Christ? The scenes of your youth, visions of school days, of faces of friends, some gone and some abiding still to rejoice your soul. Contents of favorite books, mother, father, family, wife, children, home-happiness, some school-teachers that you loved; scenery that charms you, evening songs among the hills; your task and all the passion you have for it and joy in doing it, and all the other things—factors, persons, experiences—of which you might say, "There is nothing better." Then to test it out for Christ, turn away from it all and bid him come instead, and to actually behold him in all his beauty and power, to hear his calling voice, and to see the scars on his hands and feet, and the burden of your sin he bore—and beholding him in the end tenderly carrying you still in death's sleep to the Father and then surrender, absolutely, genuinely surrender? Then to open your eyes and follow his vision, only to see the same lovely world of

yours, but glorified by his presence and sanctified by your surrender. It is full of light and music, for he has opened heaven upon what you gave up, and he has given it back again to you who have stood the test. The secret is out. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

"James said nothing, only laughed, the adventure in his face." Let it be in ours. We're ready for it, Lord Jesus. We will fish with the bigger nets, that thy light throws against the sky.

## “MY CUP RUNNETH OVER”

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”—*Psa. 23. 5.*

THIS passage stands alone. It needs no context to give it meaning. Lift it out of this Shepherd song and carry it where you will in the vast domain of life and love and it signifies. The passage itself is like the cup of which it speaks. The prodigality of God's goodness to men that keeps boiling over its brim.

None of us asked to be born. Our arrival was announced on a little white card tied with a little white ribbon to a little larger card before we knew we were here. It is quite apparent that our volition does not antedate our advent. Some there are who are not at all pleased with God's advent law. They prefer that our prenatal selves first give consent, but I haven't very high hopes that the constitution of human nature will be amended on this wise. One thing is clear, that the case being as it is, God has seen to it that none is disappointed. The running over cup is within

easy reach of every cradle. Long before we know anything about its contents we feel its thrill;

"I have no name;  
I am but two days old."  
What shall I call thee?  
"I happy am,  
Joy is my name."  
Sweet joy befall thee!"

The cup bubbles over in youth time. A lad, as a rule, running out of his house in early summer in all the jubilation of youth, does not note the hollyhocks growing at the doorpost, or the waving fields of grain, the lure of the winding road or the tree-shadowed stream. All this doubtless is quietly distilling into that God-given formless essence that we call joy. Not knowing the contents of the cup, he drinks his draught and shouts, "'Tis good!" Children are always seeking out objects to pour their cup upon. That is the meaning of play. Play is not the parent or the producer of joy, but the offspring of it. And it seems to be no respecter of persons and places. I find the street children playing in the poorer quarters of this city as happy and merry as are those who sweep along the boulevards in luxurious limousines, and with wardrobes of many

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<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt.

changes. Whether the cup be of common wood or costly gold, it runs over. Despair is not known to childhood.

Then comes the time when God enlarges the cup to contain the vaster life; large enough, so to speak, to hold all the vineyards from which the former wine was distilled. We become our own husbandmen. We name this the period of responsibility. A call comes to respond to and take in all life, truth, and love. If we get lost, it is at about the age of twenty, and the sign of it is the turning up in Lilliputian Land holding still our empty baby cup. Some men never put away their childhood toys. They reconstruct them for older years, they roll out their cup in the Mill of Time and make a vast thin bowl of it, but it is the same stuff. They grow into complicated play, competitive games—hard, puzzling, and perplexing ones—but deriving only the same satisfaction they did as youngsters. The instrumental and mechanical world in which they live is that of a metal cup; it may be gold, but it is juiceless and empty. It never can be filled. It is on record that many men pass out of this world with big fortunes and great names who never once could say, "My cup runneth over."

Every man's soul was born for a universe and it is his business to achieve it. Some live

a full-orbed life in spite of their narrowing specializations, and some don't. While we are in a social and economic way legislating against the avarice that exploits human life in unjust terms of labor, let man consider what he is doing with himself. Let him go apart to some solitude and address himself thus: "Am I using up my life in a mere tradesman and task-man, or am I using my task as an instrument to open unto me a larger, fuller, lovelier world?"

And I would suggest that you call nature to your help and choose for your point of contemplation some high hill, where spreading below are industries and cottages, the ways and crossways where men and women walk, where factory whistles and human laughter and song blend, where an infinite sky holding the inscrutable secrets of God joins the hill slopes and the plains where men sow and reap, and there look, think, dream until it all lies before you as a symbol of the wholeness of life, and try to catch something of the genius of that composition; the spirit that causes it to consist and throws the beauty over all.

Remember this; whatever you are, artisan, engineer, merchandizer, doctor, jurist or prophet, or whatever your degree of success may be as such, you will have your successors. Moments will come to you when in the flush



of some applauded achievement you will question this. But don't be a fool. As such I say you have your successor, but your life has no successor, and what can a man give in exchange for his life? Success in things has already buried nine tenths of some great men; only a throbbing brain and a clever, grasping hand are seen above the mound. Their capacity to embrace the universe has gone. And the condemnation is not in their success in things, but *in only that*. Manifestly, the vision, genius, judgment, and assiduity that focused on a spot of trade and gave it power and productivity could have comprehended the whole panorama, but it didn't.

I would call you to be like the men of Oberammergau, ever moving out shops and shavings, woods and metals, into that larger amphitheater with Galilæan skies and Judæan hills, in company with Christ. My fellow men, in a world like this, where birds fly through the air, and lilies grow in the fields, and a new glory dawns with every day, where eternity sings in every heart, don't die in a shop, with no companionship with the Great Unseen. Catch it all until your cup runs over.

I have a few friends whom I call my wealthy friends. Their names are not in Bradstreets or the social register. But, I reaffirm, they are

rich, for I've seen their treasures. They come to me as out of a spring morning and bring life's whole sweet panorama with them. It came to pass that some time ago, on the edge of some meditative evening,

"In the silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills,"

they dreamed their dream, strove with their angel, and beheld life in a vision. They love life and song; are intellectual but not pedantic; sensible and practical, but not coldly compressed, compact, concrete. A warm compassion runs through their thoughts like a winding summer stream. Their souls are communion cups of which I drink, and am awakened into a vision of all the fields and vineyards from which their spirit has been gleaned. What a tragedy if that day should ever come when they come to me out of some dark passageway covered with the dust of their enterprise with a great bag of material success bending down their backs; and I should say: "Sing to me again of your songful country," and they should reply, "I cannot sing where I cannot see; behold my face is now on the earth only."

When educators have agreed that the purpose and end of their task are to prepare young

men and women to live a full-orbed, wholesome, serviceable life with an eternal touch to it all, they will be giving what we might call the synthetic, synchronous, comprehensive courses the same prominence and prestige in the curriculum as the analytic. I mean the broader cultural courses with some of the form and substance of the art of living; ethics and æsthetics, the fine arts, journeys into the metaphysical and other ventures in the realms of beauty, truth, mystery, and humanity; courses that have a panoramic aspect and a relational value.

He cannot be said to be educated who is weak in cohesive power, although his mind may be a whole bureau of facts, perfectly classified and filed. Is a fact a fact when unrelated to its larger truth any more than a head is a head when severed from the body? Indeed, we have many well-stocked minds to-day that are like a tattered coat of many colors—keen, versatile, brilliant in color, and substantial in patches, but weak at the seams: loose tatters wanting a tailor. After all, the best of our education is not that which graduates us two thirds on our way to a trade or a profession, with a well-fashioned capacity to be filled there, but that which graduates us to the hither edge of life's world at spring, which

when beheld, causes us to cry out for the joy of it, "My cup runneth over."

To turn for a moment to the inner life, what is that but a cup to be filled with the Christ spirit, the abiding presence of Jesus? The brimful cup is mysteriously and strangely personal; the run-over is social; and I do not believe that this arid, barren, human society will ever be irrigated and made productive, and bloom like the rose, except by the spillways of personal experience. This is a mooted teaching I know, and we won't debate it here. Suffice it to say now that the cup is bound to be the symbol of the spiritual life. Cups were never meant for dry measure, or catchalls for scraps of religious paper, beads, or rosaries, but a container of something vital, fluidy, and flowing, warm and richly spreading; in short, a wet concoction for the inside. Now, don't think you have an experience because you know a little theology; don't think, because you have mastered the logical and chronological positions and relations of guilt, repentance, salvation, justification, sanctification, etc., that you have the well of living water springing up in you. A literary digest is not a drink. Phraseology no doubt fooled some of our fathers. Was it not said of the eloquent George Whitefield—I think it was he—that he

could set all the ladies in his congregation weeping by the manner in which he pronounced "Mesopotamia"? Think of that!

It might be well for us to examine ourselves to know whether our religious capacity is Saint Paul's correspondence basket or the communion cup of Christ. Events will tell; famines will come, droughts and desolations will spread over our little earth; then we shall know whether we have something to drink or merely something to read.

Give me these things: the living Christ that moves through the gospel and the world; the songs of the Christian poets; that human love that moves from face to face and soul to soul; the whole diapason of nature, and here leave nothing out; give me the whole harmony of it—meadows and streams, seas and high mountains and the interposing hills, the whole firmament of azure or its darker hue star-sprinkled, all the color and murmurings of the fields; here and there let there be those sublime silences in which I hear the whisper of my God—and "my cup runneth over."

"Good enough," you say, "when man's world is right-side up. But what when it is upside down, when trouble, loss, and sorrow come?" No matter. This inner cup is suspended from the hand of God. No impact can

upset it. It is ever upstanding and running over. Men prone on their backs in torture and disease have said, "My cup runneth over." Men bowed low in grief have touched their lips to the cup's brim and exclaimed through their tears, "My cup runneth over." Men, whose fortunes have been swept away as with a hurricane and lost, have sought then their inner treasures which no creditor can claim, and finding there some noble friendship, that love that stands alone, have looked out on the wreckage saying, "Much is taken," and looking in again, "Much abides; my cup runneth over."

So let us be so rich in life that when the day comes for us to leave these familiar haunts and splendid tasks, we can stand on our farthest Western shore and drink a toast from our cup to the dear old world that we are leaving: "Here's to you, O world that I'm leaving, your lovely prospects and God-brooded nature! Here's to your cities and your farm lands, and the products of all your spirit and many skillful hands! Here's to your climates and your weathers; your summers and your winters! Here's to your songs and your sorrows! Here's to your mornings, and lastly to your evenings, O wonderful world, farewell!"

And then to turn to the black-hulled trans-



port waiting at the dock, and crash the cup upon the bowsprit, saying, "O good ship that men call Death, I name thee Victory; thy sails are wings, thy Captain is my call. I break my cup on thee, for thou bearest me to that larger life in God that needs no cup to hold it any more."

## ABOUT GOD

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.”—*Apostles' Creed*.

“No man hath seen God at any time.” True, but true as it is this statement need not to be the father of such a brood of distorted views and unworthy guesses about God. No man has seen the real “you” of you or the real “me” of me at any time either; but are we left altogether without a mutual understanding? We have bodies and features, thought-expression, a sense of each other's presence and that little world of things and relations that bears the impress of our individuality, which ever serve as a groundwork to support a highly probable truth and interpretation. So the universe, with its wonder, beauty, and its everlasting significance, its mystery of life, bespeaks an almighty personal God.

While the knowledge derived from it is inferential, like that we have of one another, yet, being constantly confirmed, it amounts to a truth. It cannot be denied that the development of friendship, which is a commerce with the unseen, reveals more and more of the mystery and reality of the person, and just as

certainly there can be a deepening of the kinship between the unseen man and the Spirit of God, in which the soul moves out to feel and find the silent but sure unfolding of the personal God.

All such terms applied to God, as "The First Cause," "Life Force," "The Perfect Being," "Supreme Intelligence," "Eternal Presence," "Ultimate Good," are true and reliable inferences, but the thing to note is that they are not necessarily the products of a close relation to God. No man would need to engage in metaphysical pursuits to arrive at such conclusions. The ordinary man—not the extraordinary but the ordinary man—who has eyes and ears only half open, who has the visor of his mind lifted only to a crack's breadth, just to get a squint at a small parcel of the world, perhaps a square yard, if there be a flower growing in it, or a bird's wing soaring through it, or even a blade of grass, will find sufficient to force him to conclusions denominated above.

I recall how, at the beginning of my theological studies, I plodded through chapter after chapter of arguments for the existence of supreme intelligence and wisdom, behind, and responsible for, the world. It was all true, but it seemed useless, at least, to me. The glimpse

of a tree, a child, or a sunset was quite enough for me. The ontological, moral and teleological arguments did not add one cubit to the stature of my understanding of God. Skeptics and even atheists, by coining another group of terms, accepted similar conclusions. They all subscribe to a First Cause and a Supreme Somebody or Something.

John Fiske takes a tilt at Frederick Harrison, who calls the Omnipresent power in the universe "The All-Nothingness" (which I think was more the forced product of his scientific "ultimate cause" pursuit than his atheistic tendencies), but who apparently overlooked that imperishable and universal act and fact, worship; so John Fiske fancies man praying to this power thus: "O, X<sup>n</sup>, love us, help us, make us one with thee."

Mr. H. G. Wells' description of our ancestry as silt and slime deposits on the primordial beaches does not startle me, for I know that Mr. Wells is a scientist, and scientists must deal with secondary causes. Neither his image of life-creation nor of God is convincing. He has said nothing conclusive. He has yet to tell how the animate sprang from the inanimate, and to account for and justify man as we have him, emerging from and circumscribing his very being.

We all believe in God as the Creator of heaven, earth, and man, but strange to say, some allow that belief to be shaken and confused by the little interjection, "But how?" The *modus operandi* of the Creator has assumed a place in our minds that does not belong there. Indeed, there are some who even believe that organic evolution destroys our faith in a Father-Creator. I wish to say that organic evolution has nothing to do with the reality and destiny of that life we have as children of God. It touches it nowhere. God created life before he created man, and he created the man-animal before he created us. Wells' slime did not create life. It may have carried the germ of it—but that God made. I can understand how life by virtue of its native dynamic and design, divided into the two life-kingdoms, just as in the kingdom of animals that mysterious division of sex appears. I can also understand how in our branch life might proceed through various and ascending animal forms until the stage of the ape-ancestor appeared. The man-animal was not born from that. God took issue and derived the man-animal, fashioning it in a form and substance like ours. The man is not born yet, but when the Almighty presses his image upon it, which is not a physical image, and breathes his divine breath upon

it, then man is born. We are born and reborn of his Spirit.

What is all the fuss about? I believe in organic evolution merely as a method of the Divine Creator; and certainly I would as soon have an animal as my physical ancestor as a bunch of dust or a bone, or even a human-animal type as suggested in Genesis. One is about as impersonal as the other. The description of the creation in Genesis is a poetic one, in my judgment, and a beautiful one too, and I rather think, as far as the order of creation went, is according to the fact. The time of it and the method of it are compressed in figures of speech. As such I accept its truth. Truth may come out of that which may not be scientifically correct. The first stanza of Emerson's "Concord Hymn" runs:

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world,"

and I accept the truth of it, although I know it can never square itself with our laws of sound and space. Every day we speak of the sun rising and setting. This is not only a figure of speech but an old error, and even so I accept its true impression although I know to



be scientifically correct my mind will have to shift from a geocentric to a heliocentric universe—quite a shift! I prefer the poetic conception to the extended prose I would have to use to describe the phenomenon.

I cannot understand why we are so upset over our alleged prenatal physical state, and yet calmly and complacently accept our inevitable postmortem physical state—"earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Is there anything more disturbing in the fact that we begin with an animal form than that we end with a pile of dust? Is it not just as startling to know that our physical selves this very minute are the ancestors of that pile of dust?

I believe that God the Almighty Father created the heavens and the earth, but not in six of our calendar days; not only because I think the account in Genesis is poetry, but because I read the history of it in the history book that science has opened, with its illustrations of fauna and flora, and find it as convincing as the accounts and pictures in any history book, but more than that, because I don't believe God works that way. While he is a maker in the sense that he created the seed of life and the source of the universe, he in every other respect proves himself to be a planter, grower, and a vigilant and industrious

Husbandman. His word is "Grow." His plan, that of progress, development, and unfolding.

I do not mean to say that God could not have created men as a special and peculiar type, or even as individuals, or that he could not have created a universe in six days, for I believe all things are possible with our Almighty Father, but, rather, that I think he did not choose to do it that way. The only formula of evolution that really affects us is the one that moves out and on, thus: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

To conclude this part of the matter: The body is not "Me" (ungrammatical, but let it go); it is my house that I have inherited. I am a spiritual relative of God, and he visits me in the edifice he has made for me. I am not going to sever my kinship with him because I do not know how it was built, or how long it was a-building. But what a wonderful abode it is! I am quite satisfied with it, although I never had a peep at the plans and specifications. I like the windows and the doors that give me this outlook on the world; the table and its high bread, the divinely carved furniture and its full wardrobe. It is sufficient.

Concerning the attributes of God and their significance for us, I must say that the traditional portraits composed of them have not drawn me intimately to him—the King of kings sitting in majesty on an exalted throne in the midst of the heavens, or the Great Judge and Lawgiver in the supreme seat of justice, or the Original Architect and Builder, and now the Everlasting Proprietor and Superintendent of the Universe. These images impress me with wonder, awe, and fear and elicit respect; they keep my mind whispering, “My God is a great God.” And they are valuable for this. I cannot have the sort of love for God that I ought to have without that respect, awe, wonder, and even fear, any more than a child can have a perfect love for parents without these re-enforcing factors. Now, strange to say, the attributes that could and do move me into an intimacy with the Almighty Father are the most mysterious of all. I speak of Eternity and Omnipresence. They whirl about my mind and I cannot grasp them. Who of you can conceive of a personal God being everywhere at the same time? It is as easy for us to conceive of a quart measure holding a sea. We soon get lost on that tangent that points out into the Infinite. I can’t even conceive of the amount represented by one

billion. I can make an image of the ten digits, and do a little bookkeeping, posting them here and there. These symbols never break and pour out their contents; and about all the mind can do with "eternity" and "omnipresence" is a little bookkeeping, or pronounce them as words. The seeming unreality, of course, is not in Eternity or Omnipresence, but in the limitation of the mind.

Every funeral we attended taught us that the life is not flesh, and personality is not body. The flesh and body are creatures, subjected to the laws of time and space; but the kingdom of real life is timeless and spaceless; it is eternal. The body imprisons the spirit for a purpose here, and death releases it again for a purpose beyond the here. We cannot comprehend each other's immortalities in this world. We can grip only the mortal end and become aware of our helplessness as they move out into their own mystery and vanish from our gaze.

We cannot have a mental picture of God's eternal personal presence; it is too vastly vast, but we can have the "feel" of it in the heart. God has transmuted the quantity into quality for its abiding in the soul.

How do you think of God? Theologians used to scold our mind a good deal because of

our tendency to anthropomorphism, or humanizing our concept of God. They might as well have saved their breath and spleens, for that tendency springs natively from our own mortal limitations. To teach us anything else would be as successful as teaching an imbecile to reason. And the fact is that these impatient philosophers have no advantage over us except a little more vocabulary. Who can think of a personal God as a universal, space and time-filling, power-fraught, love-fraught invisibility, calling for our love to answer? We have as yet no successful romance with entia. And you may be sure, when people talk of eternal personal presence as a bodyless conception, they are describing emanations, radiance, effulgence or glory of the only image the mind can form, the similitude of man.

God to us is Jesus Christ. He who made us sent to us Jesus, of our own flesh and blood, of our thoughts and passions, to reveal and manifest himself to us. Why? There was no other way. So, with this feeling of the "Eternal" that God mysteriously put in our hearts, and this mental image of God in Jesus Christ, we have the only conception we can have of his abiding Presence. It is the multiform Jesus. Christ in China or America is as many visions of Christ as we have thoughts of him.

One walks this road, one enters this house, one moves into this mind and heart. So is the immanence of God here conceived. He is not subjected to our laws of time and space, however; he appears and disappears, moves through doors as he did in his resurrection body; our sense of the eternal in the heart allows us this; but the image is human. Human, but not geographical or racial. We do not change his form or dress. He is not a Hollander in Holland or a Chinese in China, and an American here, He is the Gospel Christ. Hamlet may appear in modern clothes, but not Jesus. Wherever we see him we see the same face, form, manner, his seamless robe, mantel, and sandals. They are sufficient.

Now may I present my picture of God? He leaves his throne and judgment seat and descends to earth in Christ. He finds his children wandering about the border of the Kingdom of Life; like foundlings, many are at the door of it, looking through, then gazing with awe-stricken faces into the vague and misty Infinite. They hear a voice calling, "Come unto me!" it sounds somewhat familiar; they turn their faces toward its source, still mystified. Christ appears and is deeply moved as he sees them crouching and turning from him. He cries, "I am your Father!" It was a great



moment. The recognition grows, they cry for joy and run to his embrace.

"Why are you trembling?" he asks.

"We are afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"Of this strange, strange place, of powers and the Great Being hidden in the mist."

"They are but shadows, children. Fear not, for your Almighty Father is here."

"Oh, that is wonderful. We have been so lonely and lost; hungry and cold, and none cared."

"Foolish children, you thought I cared more for my stars and firmament than for you!"

Here he takes a little sin-stained child in his arms, and speaks very tenderly to him: "I love you, for what you may yet be, more than sun, moon, stars and seas. I ordered them all for you. Even a sparrow does not fall to the earth without my knowledge, and how much more are you than all the sparrows."

He, still carrying the child close to his heart, walks down the road into the Estate of Life, the others following him. They enter the home-  
stead of the soul.

"How cold and dark it is in here!" he says. "Be of good cheer," and he lights the hearth, and the whole place glows. He opens the doors and windows on the southern exposure

and the warmth and fragrance of heaven steals in. He laughs a divine laughter, and joy fills the house. He lays his hands on their fretful, restless lives, saying, "Peace be unto you," and a sweet composure pervades the scene. The little child in his arms from sheer exhaustion falls asleep and dreams; it smiles and whispers out of the dream, "The eternal God is our dwelling place, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

He furnishes the table with bread for their souls to eat. They consume it with a relish.

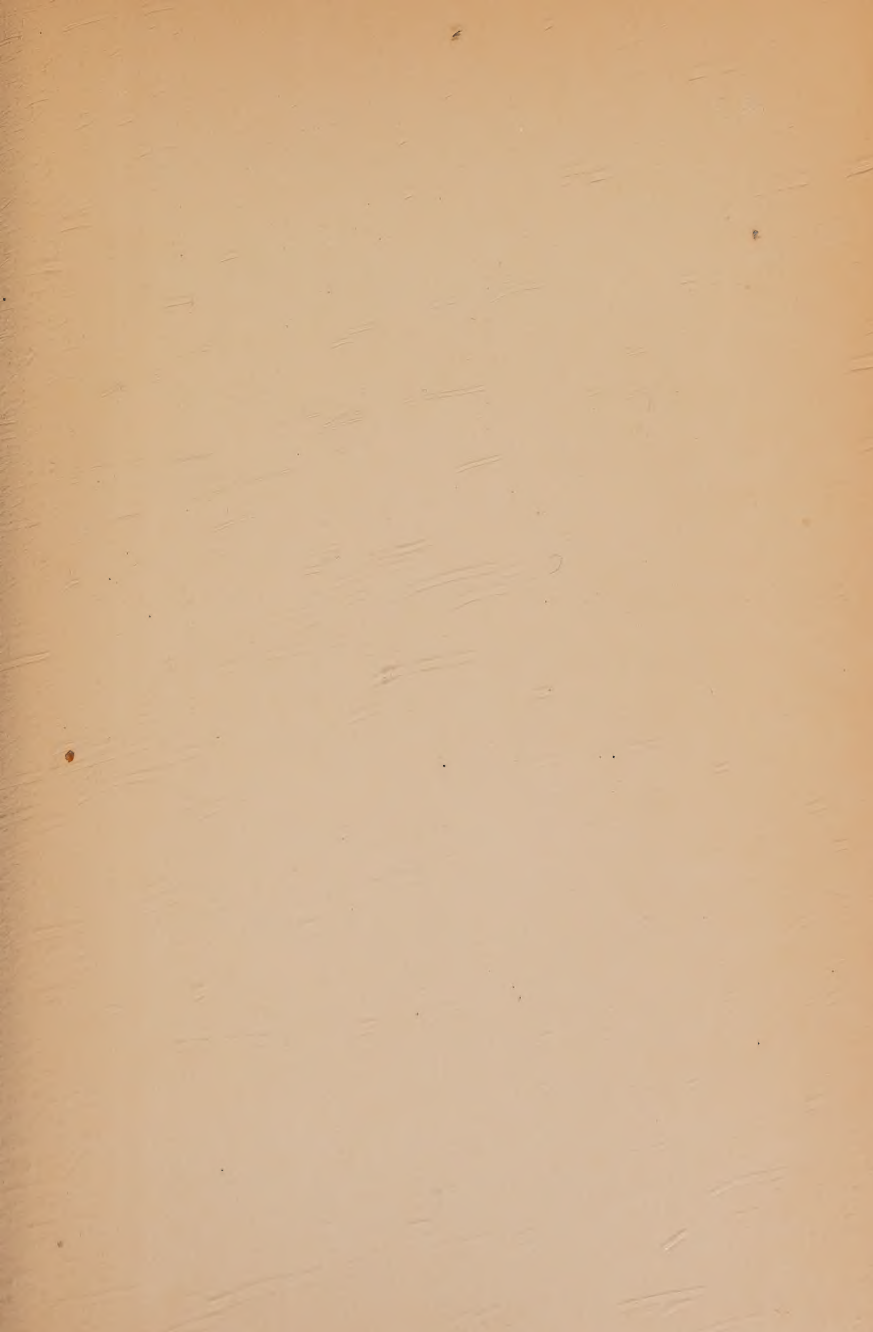
Then one very grave child, suddenly saddened, as if smitten by an ominous thought, arises and goes to the head of the table where the Father sits, and asks, "Are you going away from us again?" They all stop eating and drinking and turn their fearful and perplexed faces his way.

"No," he says, "I will not leave you orphans. I come to you to abide with you forever, and we shall live, and talk and labor together."

They all burst out with a cheer and a song: a song that he had taught them a long, long time ago, when they were yet spirit-children, and together they said, "Now we are happy."

This may be too simple and too childish for you, but it is my picture of God and the life we live in him. Our spirits are as little children.





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